ONE SHILLING.

Sporting Sketches

IN THREE CONTINENTS

BY

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"Bagatelle" is the nom de plume of Captain A. G. Bagot.
The first edition was published in 1849 for 2/6. Twenty sketches
are given, the scenes of which are laid in different parts of the
world.

"THROWN OUT."

SPORTING SKETCHES

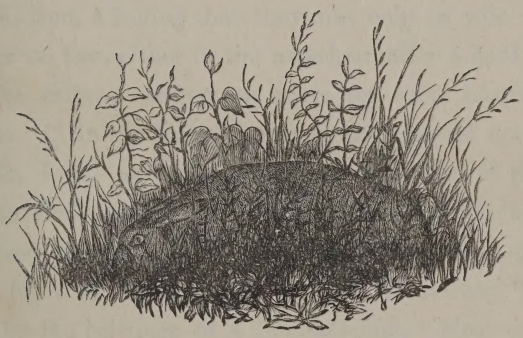
IN THREE CONTINENTS.

BY

"BAGATELLE."

(Captain A. G. Bagot)

THIRD EDITION.



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W. SWAN SONNENSCHEIN AND ALLEN,
PATERNOSTER SQUARE, E.C.
1881.

SPORTING SKETCHES

IN THREE CONTINENTS.

"HAGATELLE."

LONDON:
W. SWAN SONNENSCHEIN AND ALLEN
PATERNOSTER SQUARE, E.C.
1891.

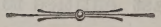
PREFACE.

"And, therefore, as a stranger, give it welcome."
Hamlet, Act I., Scene V.

I HAVE been induced to publish this Selection of Sporting Sketches from a feeling that they may help to wile away an hour or two, either in the armchair after a hard day, or in the railway carriage en route for some hospitable domain. If, in the former instance, they should act as a soporific, I am at least entitled to an amount of praise equal to that enjoyed by Mrs. Winslow; while in the latter case, should they fail to divert the attention of the reader from the monotonous buzz of the railway, I can but claim the privilege of a first attempt. Most of the sketches have appeared, at various times, in the pages of the *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, and to the courtesy of the Proprietor and Editor of that journal I am indebted for leave to reprint them. Some of my friends may recognize their "counterfeit present-

ments" in the characters I have introduced, but I have endeavoured, to the utmost of my power, to avoid treading on any toes; for, in the happy bygone days, when time and money were considerations scarce worthy of notice, we lived as a united family—brothers in sport. For the rest, having brought it to the post, I must leave "Sporting Sketches at Home and Abroad" to run on its merits.

BAGATELLE.



CONTENTS.

	PAGE
A Rum Customer	1
A Chapter of Accidents	12
A Divine—A Defeat—and a Dinner	22
Three Days with a Vacillator	34
The End of the Season	43
A Trip to Boulogne	46
Cricket under Difficulties	55
The Benares Bobbery Hounds	64
Our Pig-Sticking Club	71
Our Races	82
A Frontier Match	92
Bear Shooting in the Himalayas	99
A Day among the Snipe	108
A Central American Cock Pit	117
How We Won the Cup in Central America	127
Jottings of a Shooting Trip	135
The Gentleman Horse Dealer	145
Coachmen	150
Gentlemen Jocks	156
A Chapter of Proverbs	160

SPORTING SKETCHES.

A RUM CUSTOMER.

"Come, tumble up, you lazy beggar; it's nearly nine, and breakfast will be on the table in a quarter of an hour," were the first words I heard as I woke with a start, and found Charlie Manson's jolly form standing over me. I had come down to the Den, his place, the night before at his urgent request, to stay with him for the Swannington Hunt Races, for which event he was preparing two flyers. We were going to have a trial after breakfast between the two, and I was to have the pleasure of steering one of them. Now to be suddenly woke up and doused with cold water, is not a particularly pleasant way of commencing the day; but when it is supplemented by the recollection that in a weak moment one has consented to ride an unknown quadruped over a stiff country, with no excitement of hounds to make him jump, it becomes still more unpleasant, and as one

progresses with the business of dressing, it dawns upon a man that he is a fool to risk his neck for nothing:—at least, these were my sensations as I put on my coat preparatory to descending to the regions of tea and toast.

"At last!" was the greeting I received on opening the dining-room door. "We've been waiting for you for ten minutes. Tom (the stud groom) wants to know your weight, and—oh, you don't mind which nag you ride, do you? because he says if you weigh more than I do, he would sooner you rode Satan. He's got a bit of a temper, and rushes rather at his fences, but you can hold him; only don't let him go too fast at the rails or you will come to mortal grief."

This is jolly, thought I, sincerely hoping that Charlie would prove the heaviest; indeed, a wild thought of slipping some lead into his shooting-coat pockets came into my head. However, in for a penny, in for a pound, and of course it was a pound; that is, I found myself nearly four pounds more than mine host, and consequently doomed to Satan.

"Cheer up, old man! You don't look as if you liked it!" said Charlie. "Well," I replied, "after your charming description of Satan I cannot say I feel actually in clover." "Nonsense; he only wants holding, and surely it's better to catch hold of the devil than let the devil catch hold of you," bantered Charlie, who I believe

secretly rejoiced in the turn affairs had taken. However, it was no good letting breakfast get cold while ruminating on the possible chance of ever eating dinner again; so I set to work and somewhat revived under the influence of a devilled kidney and a cup of hot coffee. A few minutes later I was taken off to the stables to view the pair of "crocks," and was introduced to his satanic majesty, a dark bay about 15 hands 3 inches, very compact, with great sloping shoulders, short pasterns, and hocks that would do all that was required through dirt; powerful hind quarters fit to carry him over a house, a small head with a peculiar white blaze down the forehead, and a vicious-looking eye completed the picture, as he stood over with an ominous switch of his tail.

"Looks as if he could jump, Tom," said I. "Ay, sir, he can jump above a bit; he most ways jumps too much for some of 'em; they can't sit him, and when he does get 'em off, it aint 3 to 1 he don't go to eat 'em. He tried it on me one day, but I dropped him a hot 'un on the nose, and he thought better of it." Unfortunately for Tom's veracity, I caught Master Charlie winking at him behind my back, who finding himself detected, collapsed into the corn-bin in a fit of laughter. Eventually I made them tell me exactly what the horse's tricks were. He was a fine fencer, but almost impossible to hold; an awful demon in the stables, and had a nasty habit of buck-

jumping, which, as a rule, disposed of his rider if not on the look out for it. He had a fair turn of speed, and could stay any distance.

In the next "compartment" stood Countess, crock No. 2, a thoroughbred raking chestnut mare, rather too light and flashy for my liking, and evidently nervous, from the squeal and lash out she gave on being stripped. "A wonder to jump, and go any pace you like," was Charlie's comment; "but I am a little doubtful of her powers of lasting." "Last most of the Swannington lot out," Tom was heard to growl *sotto voce*. "Who is going to ride her?" I asked. "Well," replied Charlie, "Johnny promised to, and if you like you can have the mount on Satan for the cup." "Not for the world; I've given up steeplechasing, many thanks," I said; "but I can tell you of a man who would do you down to the ground. You remember Dick Harding? Well, he has come back from what Terry would call the 'Continong,' and you know how he can ride a horse over a country." "Y—es," mused Charlie; "but he is such a desperate blackguard—you never know what he may be at; still, I suppose he will run straight for me. He owes me a good turn for that Stockbridge affair"—a piece of business in the matter of pulling a horse that did not redound much to Mr. Harding's credit, and which would, but for Charley's timely interference and knowledge of the noble art of self-

defence, have resulted in the disfigurement of the gentleman's personal appearance by the infuriated mob.

By this time Tom had saddled the two horses, and, carefully clothed, they were despatched under the charge of his attendant sprites to the place where the fun was to begin. At this crisis up drove a tallish man in a spider dogcart, with a good-looking iron-grey in the shafts and one of the smallest tigers I ever saw, balanced (he was not sitting) behind. "Who is that?" said I. "Oh, don't you know? that's the Colonel," replied Charlie. "He has only lately come down to these parts; he is a great joke, a shrewd Yankee, who can do what nine men out of ten cannot—that is, keep his tongue between his teeth. In fact, to use his own expression, he is 'pretty smart, you bet.'"

It appears Charlie had asked him over to see the trial and dine, feeling sure that he would keep his own counsel and probably give valuable advice, for he was, Tom informed me, one of the best judges of a horse on that side of the country. Presently I found myself bowing to the new comer, who, having looked me over, merely said, "Proud, sir," and immediately entered into a discussion with Charlie on the relative merits of some "tew twenty trotters." Gradually bringing the conversation round to the business in hand, and pulling out his watch, he gave vent to his feelings as follows: "Guess, Mr. M——, I'm

dry; let's have one smile, and we'll go and see these critturs of yours jump."

Having "smiled" all round, off we went to the paddock at the back of the house, where we found Tom with the nags all in readiness, and Charlie pointed out the course. "Over the low fence in the bottom, past the hayrick in the corner, leaving it on the right, up to the elm standing by itself, over the rails, and be careful of Satan there; then bear to the left, where you can see one of my men on the hill, with a white handerchief on a stick, across the fallow, round the barn, over the shoot of new rails, down the hill to the brook—Satan don't like water, by the way—and home up the big meadow below us, finishing past the waggon I've had put there; you can't make a mistake." "Hum!" said I; "perhaps Satan can though, which would be worse."

Here Tom led up his majesty, and I essayed to mount, a performance that was not rendered easier by the gallant bay, who evidently knew what was up, and insisted on going round and round in a circle, causing the Colonel to ejaculate, "Wall, I'm darned if he ain't raal grit! Make a fortune as a roulette board." However, all things must have an end, and at last I was hoisted fairly home, and followed Charlie down the field. "Air you ready, gentlemen?" from the Colonel; and on our assenting, "Let 'em rip."

I never knew before how a horse could pull. I shot past the chestnut as if she was standing still; over the first fence like an arrow, and was half way on my journey towards the rails before I could get a pull; even then it was a miserable effort, and Satan rushed at them like an express train. Luck favoured us, however, and we skimmed over in safety. How about the new shoot the other side of the barn though? I wondered, for the further we went the more determined the brute seemed to be, and, to make matters worse, I was not in training, and the Colonel's "smile" was asserting itself by a sharp pain in my side. How I envied Charlie his mount! The mare, going well within herself, lay about three lengths behind, rather on my off side, and looked as comfortable a conveyance as a seat in a first-class smoking-carriage. However, there was no time left for reflection, for the white rails made themselves too apparent, and in another minute I found myself flying through the air with a confused vision of being followed by a dark mass with four bright heels. Strange to say, I landed on my legs and turned head over heels like a shot rabbit, which probably saved me a crusher. Satan was up again in a moment, and stood with expanded nostrils, trembling like an aspen leaf; so astonished was he, that there was no difficulty in remounting. On making play now in the wake of the mare, I found all the devil knocked out of

him, and I was obliged to have recourse to strong inducements in order to get up enough pace for the brook, into which he dropped one leg, but got over with a scramble.

I was now so blown that I was as near as a toucher off again. Charlie of course cantered in easily, Countess never having made a single mistake from start to finish.

"Well," said he, "how did you like the journey? By Jove, you'd make your fortune in a circus. I never saw such a beautiful summersault as you made at the rails! Seriously, though, I was afraid you were in for a crumpler. What do you think of them, Colonel?" "Wall, sir, your mare *is* grit; but that bay will whip creation—that catas*trophe* at the snake fence has taught him a lesson, I kinder reckon he won't forget. I lump my pile on Satan —yew bet."

By this time I began to feel somewhat stiff, and having recovered my hat, which I lost in my pantomime business at the rails, I went up to the house to change and have a warm bath, with the luxury of a quiet weed before dinner. In the smoking-room I asked Charlie why he had run his trial in the middle of the day, and he informed me that it was the Colonel's idea, as the races would be in the afternoon, and he considered he could get a better line; besides, no one would imagine a trial would

be run any other time than the orthodox early morn, and there would be no one on the look-out.

That evening I telegraphed to Harding, and the reply came at dinner to the effect that he would be down on the following day and ready to ride. The next morning Johnny Liston arrived, and had a spin on Countess. Of course he chaffed me most unmercifully about my cropper, and told Charlie he ought to stand me a new hat.

The morning of the races broke fine, and we were all in high spirits as we drove on to the course. "Kerrect kard—kyard of this day's racing! Names and colours of the riders. Kerrect kyard, yer 'onor!" assailed us on every side, and the "Colonel," who was one of our party, would have bought up the whole stock-in-trade if we had allowed him, just to stop their noise.

The first race was the Fallowfield Stakes, in which Countess was engaged, and a hum of admiration was heard as Johnny took her past the stand for the preliminary canter. Mare and man looked as near perfect as they could, and Charlie had no reason to repent giving Liston the mount, for he won easily by three lengths, beating Will o' the Wisp, who carried most of the money of the neighbouring county. Our excitement as the numbers went up for the Swannington Hunt Cup was intense. The Colonel assumed the appearance of a red

hot poker, and was continually "running around to pile one more dollar on."

We had all backed Satan pretty heavily, and were not over pleased with the way he came up the course with his ears back, shaking his head. "He's in a sweet temper," said Charlie; "I vote we hedge!" "Bother hedging," returned Johnny; "that Harding is as downy a chap as you'd meet in a day's march. I believe he's kidding to get a shade better odds. There they go to the post!" Thirteen runners, "Just twelve too many," as the Colonel said. "I dew like what you Britishers call a certainty." "Off!" shouted Charlie, focussing the field. "By Jove: Satan's away with him—no—over—two down. Here they come. By Gad! that fellow Harding can ride!" As they swept past I could see the bay had evidently found his master, and was going in capital form. At the next fence, a double, Harding gave him his head, and he flew the lot, No. 1 turning a turtle. When they reappeared round the hill Satan was leading, closely followed by the favourite, a horse called Bangtail, belonging to the Master of the hounds, the remainder of those who had "stood up" being all of a heap. "Now for the water," we all whispered, as they came tearing down the hill—a confused mass of colour, two horses in front, a deal of splashing, one riderless steed following in the wake of the two leaders, and then the

shouts of the ring rose loud. "Bangtail wins! Satan! Two ponies Bangtail! Satan a monkey! S-a-a-t-a-n!" as the bay, beautifully ridden, answers the call, and shoots past the post half a length ahead.

"See here," yells the Colonel, brandishing a bottle of champagne. "Stranger, did not I tell yew. Oh, snakes!" as he disappeared backwards over the side of the waggonette into the *debris* of lunch below. In his enthusiasm he had forgotten he was standing in a carriage, and had stepped into vacancy. There was a dinner at the Den that night, and we emptied the Hunt Cup more than once in drinking the health of the "rum customer" who had won it.

A CHAPTER OF ACCIDENTS.

The Ploughshire country is certainly not an easy one to ride over, although doubtless it is looked down upon by the Meltonians as something totally and entirely "provincial." Still, when one or two of that august band honour us by their presence, they generally figure as "inverted commas" once or twice before the end of the day. From its peculiar variety, that is the different sorts of "obstacles" one has to encounter, it is an admirable school for a "young un," either man or beast. At one fence it is a case of on and off, at the next a creep, while the third requires full steam and fly the lot, an occasional bullfinch being thrown in to complete. The ditches are mostly broad, deep, and full of water. There is one fixture in particular which invariably produces a large field from all parts, with a corresponding amount of grief. The fences in that locality seem like the foxes, to have been "growed a purpose;" and it was at Danefield

Hall (the meet in question) I found myself on the morning that ushered in a most disastrous day. Indeed, from the time that the tag of my boot pulled off when dressing, everything seemed to go wrong. My favourite horse was *hors de combat*, and I was forced to ride a nag I had bought two days before, which my groom told me was "a rum 'un to back, and was the deuce and all to hold." However, I had seen it run in a military steeplechase and felt pretty confident of its powers of fencing. How basely the brute deceived me the sequel will show.

It was as usual a full meet. The park in front of the windows was quite bright with colour, and there was also a fair sprinkling of side saddles. Notwithstanding that it was what is known as a lawn meet, there was but little coffee-housing allowed after the hounds had come. "Eat and drink as much as you like before, but directly time's up out you all go," was what the cheery old host and best of sportsmen, Sir John Gilford, used to say. And when the white-headed old butler announced with great pomp that "the 'ounds is come, Sir John," it was a case of boot and saddle *instanter*.

I had a particular friend, Jim Weston, staying with me, and my old pal Johnny Liston as usual was handy. Charlie Manson I expected to see at Danefield, as he generally turned up there, being a great favourite with Sir John, who always kept room for him and his horses.

It became a standing joke to call us three the inseparables, and if any mischief occurred in any of the counties adjoining, it was always put down, I am sorry to say, to us. Jim Weston was a dear good fellow, somewhat obese, perhaps, but a first-rate actor and comic singer, a dead shot, and a nailing good bat. One thing he could not do —ride. He was the most utter funk on a horse imaginable, the fun of it being that he was awfully touchy on the subject, and could not stand being chaffed.

The first real mishap on that eventful day occurred to Jim; he was getting on his horse at the door, and sat somewhat heavily down in the saddle, as bad luck would have it, on to the tail-pocket of his coat, wherein his servant had put a box of fusees. Bang they went! and there was Jim all afire behind. Perhaps he did not nip off sharp! and to see him in his shirt-sleeves, stamping and fuming, trying to extinguish the fire on the one hand, and his servant on the other, was most ludicrous. "I do not know what you two fools are laughing at," said he; "but I've burnt the d—d tails of my coat off through that oaf's stupidity. You, I mean," turning to his repentant valet. "I believe you and Johnny would cackle if I'd burnt all my skin off. Look here Master James (the valet), if ever I catch you sticking any infernal fusees in my pocket again I'll make you eat them. How the deuce am I to appear like his?" "Sit down on your saddle

and hide it," roared Johnny. However, Jim would not take the advice, and I had to lend him my coat, donning a brand-new pink myself, in which garment Johnny said I looked like an overgrown geranium, and predicted all sorts of croppers—which came to pass before the day was out.

At last we made a start, and arrived at Danefield just as the hounds were moving off. The first draw was a sort of complimentary farce, viz., the laurels; and after that we trotted on to the osiers, which was an almost sure find. On the way there was a most tempting little fence, a nice low rail, with a ditch on the far side, so instead of going through the gate, I thought I would turn my new purchase over it and see in what sort of form he jumped. I went at it steadily till within a length or two, when I gave the horse his head; the next moment there was a loud crack, a splatter of duckweed and dirty water, and I was deposited in the next field, with my gallant steed at the bottom of the ditch, amid the roars of the whole field, above which I could distinguish Johnny's voice, offering "to buy my new pink at a discount." The brute never rose an inch, and breasting the rail, which luckily broke, staggered through into the ditch.

Anyway, the pink did not look so new, and it had probably taught my friend a lesson, though I confess I was puzzled, as I had seen the animal fencing splendidly

about a year before. I afterwards found out that he had been going in a dog-cart, and consequently had forgotten his gymnastic exercises. When we arrived at the osiers, I asked Johnny if he had seen Charlie anywhere, and he said "No; but his horses are here, for I saw Tom. By the way, have you heard of Charlie's new find—a French sportsman? Dibden tells me it is the greatest joke out; he puts the Gaul and the 'Colonel' together; the 'Colonel' tells all sorts of yarns, which are swallowed like oysters, and the Frenchman thinks he is a perfect Nimrod, and gets a buster at every fence. By Jove! here they are."

At this moment up rode Charlie, the Colonel, and a foreigner, who looked a cross between a pastry-cook and a general. "Here we are, old boy, how are you all! Jim Weston too! why he's too fat to hunt," was Charlie's greeting; while the Colonel, with a twinkle in his eye, said to me, "Mornin', sir; so you've been doing circus again. I'm darned if you shan't be fixed as a lottery-wheel at the next ex*hi*bition. Fill your pockets with dollars, there'd be an almighty shower of 'em. It would draw, yew bet." Here Charlie struck in with "Gentlemen, let me introduce you to Monsieur Le Baron de la Bourse," on which we all bowed. "Great Sportsman, is not he, Colonel?" "Sportsman," replied that worthy, "guess he'll show them how to dew it. He has the most almighty fine seat" (*sotto voce*) "on a chair; and though

he ain't altogether a fixture in the saddle, reckon he'd put a Comanchee to the blush the way he can whoop and holloa."

"The Baron," at this juncture, thought it was almost time for him to say something, notwithstanding that his vocabulary of the English language was not abundant; so he commenced with, "My vriends moi, I com to see ze sport—j'aime la chasse. I ride, yas—ver nice, and my vriend Colonel, he give me l'instruction—oui, he say jomp and, le cheval he jomp. Sometime he carry me viz 'im; bot quelquefois I not go also, bot make a—make a—ah! I forget—an overtip, n'est ce pas? Et puis, ze Colonel he laff comme le diable!" I am afraid that we all followed "the Colonel's" bad example and laughed "comme le diable" too. However, our mirth was silenced by hearing a whimper which gradually swelled into a full chorus, and a minute later, "Gone aw-ay, gone aw-a-a-y!" from the bottom of the osiers signalled the departure of the "varmint." Here was a pretty mess. The fox away at the other end all in a second, while we were fooling about with "M'sieu le Baron." Without stopping to think about it, Charlie, Johnny, and self made tracks as hard as we could, followed by the Colonel and Jim. "The Baron" having caught his horse tight by the curb, at the same time spurring him all down the shoulder, was recumbent on mother earth, as the animal

resented the insults by going straight on end, which proved too much of a perpendicular for the Frenchman, and the last thing we heard as we rattled off was, "Ah, mon Dieu! Mon Dieu! Vere he climb to, mon Colonel? I tomble off!"—which he did, over the tail.

When we got down to the bottom end we saw the tail hounds just emerging from a particularly nasty brook, and the leading ones streaming across the opposite meadow, with Tom, the huntsman, and a hard-riding farmer alone in their glory, the whole of the rest of the field, like ourselves, having been "chucked out." It was a case of in or over, and in it was for a good many. Strangely enough, my steed arrived safely on the other side, but played me exactly the same trick at the next fence as he did at the rails, coming head over heels, and sending me sky-rocketing again. Luckily, the hounds checked in the next field, and I was able to "pick up the pieces" in time to get to them before old Harbinger hit off the line. Away we went merrily for Parson's Gorse, to which bourne led a convenient line of gates, thereby enabling me to arrive in safety. From the gorse we ran a sharp ring back to the osiers, and on our way picked up Jim Weston and the Baron, who had by this time re-established himself, and was in high glee, for he informed us that he had "seen ze reynard ron ovare ze vield avec comment—ah, ze brosh ver dirtie."

They had both gone round by a bridge, and met the fox on his return journey. However, the hounds were too close to allow of "ze reynard" wasting any time, so holding to the right he made up his mind for a main earth in Colby Wood, some three miles off, and there we went a cracker. My nag improved in his jumping powers at every fence, though he did put me down twice more, the second time breaking his bridle, which delayed me for some time, and made me almost wish I had joined the ranks of the "high-road brigade." As I approached Colby I saw something unusual was up, and on arriving found a most ludicrous comedy being enacted. In the ditch was the Baron's steed; while the Baron himself was gesticulating and "sacré-ing" most vehemently on the bank, endeavouring to get him out. Sitting on the rail and looking most disconsolate was Jim Weston, wringing out his coat, while a small boy was holding his horse just inside the wood. The fox having gone to ground, a number of admiring spectators had assembled, prominent among whom were Charlie and Johnny. On inquiring "What the dickens had happened?" I found that the Baron, having arrived off the friendly road just as the hounds entered the wood almost at the fox's brush, was so excited that he charged valiantly into the ditch with the result above mentioned; while Jim's mishap was accounted for by the small boy in the most *naïve* manner

possible; for on Charlie singing out, "What's up, Jim, with you? and what's the lad holding your horse for?" the urchin took upon himself to reply as follows: "Hay couldna jump isself mayster, so ay gied may a tanner to catch his oss when ay tourned it oer t'fence, but when ay come to git oer I'm darled if ay didna fall end oer in to bottom, up to is neck in wayter." As may be imagined, this speech caused considerable amusement to all but Jim Weston, who was not best pleased at being caught in the predicament. Eventually we managed to extract the Baron's horse and pacify the rider thereof, though we did not succeed in the latter until the Colonel tried his powers of persuasion, and told him that unless he got on he would lose his reputation as a sportsman. We did not do much more that day, though a short spin in the afternoon produced additional "grief."

One incident, being retributive justice, must be recorded. I had noticed a small boy on a pony under the care of his groom, also that the pony was a deal too much for the boy; and sure enough in the afternoon scurry, while we were pounding down a long grass field, I saw the little fellow being run away with, crying like a good one but sticking on well, while the fool of a groom was chaffing him. As they neared the fence the groom fired away for the gate, leaving his little master to his fate. Thinking there might be an accident I managed to stop the pony,

but in galloping past the groom's horse I started it off, and it made straight over the fence, when from the other side arose a fountain of water—the ill-mannered idiot having landed in a horse-pond. So delighted was the boy that he forgot his past troubles, and told his bedraggled and duckweedy attendant "he had better go home and put his feet in hot water." I must say I think it served the groom right, and was a very good finale to a day that had turned out "a chapter of accidents."

A DIVINE—A DEFEAT—AND A DINNER.

"Two by honours and the odd trick—ring the bell like a good fellow, will you?" were the first words I heard on entering the card-room of the Mayfair Club at about eleven P.M. one fine night on the 14th of December, in the year of grace 187—. The speaker was a sporting young plunger of my acquaintance, who had, for "one night only," foregone the pleasures of the last burlesque, in order to gratify the longings of three friends to win as much of his money as they could, in the limited time allowed them by the rules of the club. But to judge from the faces of his "pals," and the exultant tones of my young friend, the game seemed to be going on the principles of the inverse ratio.

Having complied with his modest request, I looked round to see who else there was in the room that I knew. On the right by the door was a most ill-assorted rubber; to wit, one general officer of H.M. Bengal Civil Service,

corpulent, choleric, and curried, divided in opinion as to whether his partner ought to have played his knave before the ten, or whether "the service, sir, is going to the devil." "Waiter, *will* you shut that infernal door?" issuing from his lips every two minutes. His partner was, of all mortals, my esteemed friend, Jim Weston, and for opponents the pair had an eminent, though budding statesman, and a distinguished and popular writer.

At a small table on the left was seated Johnny Liston, who was instructing an elderly gentleman well known "on 'Change," in the art of marking the king before playing his card; the said elderly one being better versed in the intricacies of "carrying over" and "contangoes" than écarté. Standing behind him was Monsieur le Baron de la Bourse, to whom, of course, the game was second nature; while in front of the fire was lounging (I cannot call it seated) his bear leader, "the Colonel." Directly he saw me he motioned me by a wave of his huge cigar to come over and talk to him; and, on making my way there, he said, "See here, sir; I've got a little meeting at my fixins next week. The lot are coming; if you'll jine, we'll make E*man*cipation Day of it. Hounds come thereabouts, and if that boss-eyed Baron don't kill my horse, I can give you a swing over—I can." "What day?" say I. "Tuesday and Wednesday," replied he;

"then, if you ain't chawed up, you can git away and run your Christmas through with your maiden aunt, or what other relation you fancy most likely to be profitable in the dollar line." "Well, I should like it of all things," said I; "but I've got an old school chum coming to stay with me that week. He's a parson, who is as good across country as he is in the pulpit." "Bring him along tew," continued the Colonel. "I've some white-eye whisky that will suit him right away. Reckon after he's done about tew smiles, he won't know whether he's fixin' up the Marriage Service or on the line of an old dorg-fox. You ain't many leagues off my hotel, and dinner on Wednesday will be prime yew bet." Such an invitation was not to be refused, so I booked it Wednesday evening, seven sharp, for self and friend.

By this time the elderly gentleman had had about enough of écarté, and getting up was immediately button-holed by the Baron, who tried to explain to him in broken English that "Ven you harve ze mauvais cartes in ze middle orf ze game, il ne faut pas propose, parceque if ze adversaire no harve goot hand, he no grand chose—alors —you propose—he get ze goot hand et voilà tout est perdu."

The explanation certainly did not make matters more clear to the financier, but it released Johnny, who joined the Colonel and myself, and I found he was to be one of

the party on Wednesday, besides Charlie Manson, his wife, and many other of our mutual acquaintances. After a quarter of an hour's lively chat, I voted it was time for bed, and a general move was made, the Colonel and his charge going off in a hansom, while Johnny and myself walked home together to our lodgings.

On arriving at the top of St. James's Street we saw a hansom horse down, with the usual small crowd that invariably collects on those occasions, no matter what the hour, surrounding it; while on the pavement were standing our two friends who had started ten minutes before from the club. The Colonel was taking matters most philosophically, and "waiting till the cuss sets himself on end again;" but the Baron was pouring out the most piteous lamentations mingled with abuse. However, he was more frightened than hurt. He had been shot out, and, landing on his hands and knees, ripped his trowsers clean across, besides cutting his hand rather deep.

Seeing us arrive on the scene of action, he described the accident as follows:—"Mon Dieu! regardez mes pantalons! cet imbécile cocher, he com ver fast, and ze 'orse he tomble: mais no soonare he fall zan I fly ovare ze side, comme un oiseau, and I make ze détérioration in my clozes, also spoil my hands." (To the cabby:) "Ah, diable! sacré cochon! you no drive propare—damn. Vat I do now, mon Colonel? Vill you box ze sans-

culottes? Ah non, zat is not right; c'est moi je suis sans-culottes," and he laughed feebly at his own joke. We left them to put things straight, and went our way.

Next morning I was off betimes to Ploughshire, Johnny going down for two days' shooting with a Manchester cotton prince, of which more anon. Monday, I met at the station my old schoolfellow, Arthur Morgan, now the rector of Girdle-on-Cope, in Dorsetshire. Time had treated him leniently, for he was looking scarcely a day older than when I last saw him "taking leg-shooters" in the "'Varsity" match, some five years before. After we had exchanged greetings, and hoisted his traps into the dogcart, he asked me, "whether there were many bishops about this part of the country," and on my replying, "Not one that I know of under sixteen miles," he said, "Well, I'm glad of that, for I've brought my sporting kit, as you told me you had a crock that I could *go to the meet on*. But the bishops have been so down on me for hunting lately that it is not altogether safe to run up against one; although I have got a certificate from my doctor ordering me horse exercise, which I produce when questioned; still they are beginning to see through it, I'm afraid." "You jolly old humbug! as if you cared for forty thousand bishops when hounds are running!" I said. "I've heard of your exploits in Dorset, cutting

everyone down on Saturday, and preaching on Christian forbearance on Sunday."

At this juncture we drove up to my crib, and I went in to see if lunch was ready; the Rev. M—— slipping off to the stables, where I found him establishing himself as the sworn ally of my groom, and looking over the nags. I showed him the one he was going to ride on the morrow, with which he was pleased to be content, expressing a hope, however, "that it did not want much riding, and understood the Ploughshire country." We did not make a late night of it, notwithstanding the temptation to sit and chat over old times whilst smoking our after-dinner weeds, for it was a case of an early start in the morning to Brakespur Gorse, the meet being an outlying one, thirteen miles distant. I told my friend Arthur that he was booked on the Wednesday to a hunting dinner, for which he said he was quite game.

"Seven-thirty, sir—a fine hunting morning—which boots will you wear?" said all in one breath, woke me from a dream in which I was vainly endeavouring to induce the Baron to give the Bishop of —— a lead; Arthur having climbed a tree to see the sport. "Oh—any boots," I yawned. "Have you called Mr. Morgan yet?" "Yes, sir," replied my servant; "he has been up and about for best part of half an hour. Bath's ready, sir."

Out I tumbled, and soon joined his reverence downstairs. 8.45 saw us under weigh, the parson looking as thorough a workman as one could well imagine; dark cords, pair of Peel's boots, double-breasted black swallow-tailed coat, and tall hat, all fitting to perfection, combined with a seat of iron, and hands of silk. "Captious Kate," the mare he was riding, seemed to delight in him, and though with me she used to fidget and fret all the way, she walked along under his guidance as happy and sedate as possible.

We arrived at the meet in good time, and I pointed out all the celebrities, and introduced them to my sporting divine. On the signal being given to draw the gorse, Arthur and I slipped down with the first whip to the bottom end, and in about ten minutes our manœuvre was rewarded by seeing a regular traveller steal off within a few yards of us. Silence for a minute, and then such a holloa from Arthur as fairly electrified Joe, the first whip, and set both my ears tingling. Out tumbled the whole pack, followed by Nott the huntsman, who got his hounds on to the line in a moment, and away we were like smoke; a regular stampede of the less fortunate ones following in our wake. The first fence was a rasper, a ditch on both the take-off and landing sides, with a very awkward-looking rail run through the hedge on the top of the bank. Arthur and Nott swung over it as if it was child's play.

I just escaped a cropper by the skin of my teeth; but the first whip turned a regular turtle, an example followed by a good many of the field, judging from the loose horses that were careering about. However, "for'ard away!" was the order, and there was no time to be lost; hounds were racing with a burning scent, and it was not every day that I found myself with such a start. A short check a couple of fields on enabled some of the "rearguard" to come up; among them Charlie Manson, who, not recognizing either Arthur Morgan or my mare, was in a furious state of excitement and indignation at being bested by a stranger—Carpenter has it—and at it we were again ding-dong, straight for Milston big wood four miles off, Arthur leading the lot, with Charlie, as jealous as a turkey, vainly endeavouring to catch him.

Things, I thought, can't last long at this pace, or it will be bellows-to-mend with a vengeance; and sure enough we viewed our fox dead-beat only two fields ahead of the hounds. Charlie, who had come back to me, got a cropper at the next fence, a stiff drop, and while picking himself up yelled to me, "Go on, old man; for the honour of the county cut down that infernal stranger." How I laughed to myself may be imagined. One more fence down went Nott, and there was Arthur alone with the hounds, with the fox in the same field. A second later they catch sight of him, and then who-oop rings out clear

as a bell, we four arriving in a heap, just as my parson is disputing possession of "the remains" with old Harbinger and Solomon—a difficulty which Nott soon disposes of. Charlie, swallowing his mortification and mopping his face, goes up to the supposed stranger, to my intense amusement, and taking off his hat says:—"Sir, allow me to compliment you on having beaten us all in the finest forty minutes I ever saw. I have not the ple—why, I'm d——d if it ain't Arthur Morgan. You infernal old humbugging, white-chokered rascal; who ever expected to see *you?* And here have I been doffing my hat to my old fag. May I be for ever ——"

"No, Charlie," interrupted Arthur, laughing, "you've informed me of your condemnation already once, and consider how painful to my cloth to hear of your being doubly d——d."

"Well, you dear old boy," continued Charlie, "I *am* glad to see you. Where are you staying?" "With me; and he's going to dine with the Colonel to-morrow," I put in. "That's first chop," said Charlie; "the Colonel is at home, looking after things, and has sent the Baron up to town to buy what he calls *notions*." By this time the stragglers had arrived, and the last obsequies having been performed we went on to draw Milston, where Arthur and I left them, as there seemed little chance of getting a fox away, and we had a long journey home.

Next day we strolled about the village, that is we *walked* about, for strolling in December was somewhat out of place, and at six o'clock sharp we were seated in the dog-cart ready for the Colonel's dinner at seven. On our arrival we were shown into the drawing-room, where we found a goodly company assembled, half-and-half as regards gender, and every one, both the fair and the unfair (what's in a name ?) sex, seemed fully prepared to enjoy themselves. The Colonel was in full fig, "claw hammer" coat, white waistcoat, and as fussy as if the Alabama arbitration rested on his shoulders.

"Guess sir," he said to me, "this is my first attempt at what you Britishers call *con*vivi*ality*, and tho' I'm an all fired genius at a whisky bout, I reckon I'm kinder flummuxed at the genteelity of this consarn. I dew want it to go off wall, I dew that bad ; and now, as if just for con*trary*, that darned jigging French cuss must go and git palarvering at Clapham Junction, and let the cars go on without his precious carcase. Praise the Lord he's off to his own squatting next week, and yew don't catch me sammying round another toad-eater this fall yew bet."

Notwithstanding the faults of Monsieur le Baron, the dinner was perfection, and as soon as the ladies had left, the fun became fast and furious. Johnny Liston had excited great curiosity by appearing with his face stuck all over with black sticking-plaster, and all we had hitherto

been able to get out of him was that he had met with an accident out shooting. But at last we persuaded him to tell us the story, which is best told in his own words. "You see I was asked to go down and shoot with Dyson, of Dyson, Firmin, and Co., the cotton men. I knew he had got a lot of pheasants, and had just bought that place of Lord Bigtalk, who went such a howler over Cato for the Grand National last year, you know, and he had asked a large party of his friends to come and help him to shoot the covers. The first day we took the outlying spinneys and slangs. That was bad enough, for his Manchester brethren had the vaguest idea of shooting that I ever saw. The climax, though, was the big woods, for which event an additional contingent had been invited. Such a lot with new gun-cases, and most elaborate costumes, evidently fresh down from Moses and Son. I would sooner go into action, or book for the bottomless pit (beg pardon, Morgan) any day than go through it again. The man next to me was named Bottle, and his chief desire seemed to be how near he could go to my hat without blowing my head off. We got half through the second beat with only one casualty—a beater shot in the leg—when, as bad luck would have it, a hare come straight down the line from the right, and of course all the whole boiling fired at her—one after the other—most of their shot either cutting about my feet or whistling past my ears. I had a crack at her,

notwithstanding, and bowled her over. Unfortunately this so excited Mr. Bottle that he plunged after poor puss, at the same time firing both barrels of his gun into vacancy. Half the charge glanced off a tree and nailed me in the face. This was good enough. So I left them to finish the day alone; and when they came back, just as I was starting for here, my host informed me that in the 'bouquet' at the end they had managed to shoot two dogs and a boy. I have registered a vow never to go shooting in the cotton districts again."

Following Johnny's story, we had the toast of the evening—"Fox-hunting, with three times three," and Arthur led off the chorus of "John Peel," which nearly brought the roof down. We finished the evening by proposing the health of "Our friends across the Channel," coupled with the name of the Baron, who, in returning thanks, was all the more amusing, in that he was just a wee bit jolly.

So ended a most festive evening, and on starting homewards the Colonel took me on one side and said, "It all went off grand; your sky pilot (meaning the parson) is real grit. He can ride, he can sing, and he can take his liquor." His good opinion I confided to Arthur on our way home, and we both agreed that the hunting dinner was a great success.

THREE DAYS WITH A VACILLATOR.

THERE are few things more trying to the temper than to find oneself, with all one's *impedimenta*, rather late for a train, especially if it happens to be the only one in the day that promises to land you at your destination in anything like reasonable time. Yet such was my fate one morning owing to (from some unexplained reason) my forgetfulness in the matter of winding up my watch the previous night. As I sank into my seat, breathless, angry, and hot, the train moved off, leaving me to combat a vague suspicion that my servant (whose watch, oddly enough, had also "gone wrong,") in the hurry and bustle, had either left half my things behind, or packed up my sponge in the middle of my dress shirts, and my "gum boots" in juxtaposition to my white ties.

The reason for my sudden migration was an invitation from a very old friend to come and spend three or four days with him, during which period we were to have one

day's shooting, one day's hunting, and one day's horse-dealing: that is to say, an annual fair was about to be held in his locality, and my friend wanted to fit himself out with one or two "perfect ones" at a fabulously small price.

Sidney Marsden, for that was the name of my would-be entertainer, was one of those men who are never satisfied to rely on their own judgment. Whether selecting a horse, purchasing a cow, or indeed, as in his case, choosing a wife, Sidney always required a host of advisers. It did not matter if they did or did not know anything about the subject; the more opinions he could get, the happier for the moment he was, though he generally passed a sleepless night weighing the varied and conflicting counsels with which he had been favoured. Even matrimony, strange to say, had not altered or improved him in this respect. It was always—"Shall I do this or that? What do you think, old man? A. says I ought to, but B. says certainly not. Now I want to know what *you* think," the chances being a hundred to one that eventually he did exactly the opposite to what everybody had said was the proper thing. In the hunting-field, or with a gun, it was just the same; in the former he was always in a state of perplexity whether he should go slow at a fence or fast, or at all; whether a short cut down this or that lane would not be better than going

across the heavy plough; or whether he should ride Cupid first and Pluto afterwards, or *vice versâ;* while with the latter it was almost an arithmetical calculation which bird he should take, or which barrel he should fire first—by the time he had worked it out the covey being out of shot. With this exception, Sidney Marsden was a right down good fellow: liberal to a fault, he was never so happy as when mounting a friend, or doing the host at his own "festive board."

The first question that occupied his mind on our way from the station was, whether we should shoot or hunt first. "You see," he said to me, "if we hunt to-morrow, we shall have twelve miles to cover, whereas the next day it's only five. Then we are sure of a good thing at Lappington to-morrow, and Hoppas is always blank." "What's the use of going out for a blank day," I replied, "let's shoot on that occasion, and hunt to-morrow; bother the twelve miles, that's nothing."

That being settled, he required my advice as to whether he should ride his old hunter, Tarquin, or a new purchase? Never having seen either of them, I decided that the new horse should be the one selected to carry him at Lappington, as I had a vague suspicion that if I did not, it might fall to my lot to ride it, and I have a horror of "promising young 'uns" and "new purchases," more especially when they are not my own.

Before arriving at the house, I had to give my opinion as to the advisability of a black or pink coat, as well as the shortest way to the meet. I got out of the first query by suggesting "the best coat of the two;" but the second question stumped me completely, for it was my first visit to the country, and one way was as well-known to me as another. So "I left it to him," and turned the conversation.

The next morning was a very decent-looking one for scent, and I enjoyed our twelve mile trot to cover, notwithstanding that I was converted into a perambulating "enquire within upon everything." Our first draw was what they called "the round cover," and Sidney and self posted ourselves in (I was going to say) a corner, but being a round cover it should not have a corner; however, we posted ourselves in what *looked* like one, and presently had the satisfaction of seeing a fine old dog steal away with a shake of his brush that meant business.

"Look here, old man," said Sidney, "ought I to holloa? He's gone well away; what do you think?" My reply to that was to holloa myself, and proceed to pick out the easiest looking spot in a very nasty fence that confronted us. Presently out came the pack and settled down on the line straight over the nasty one, which was successfully negotiated, and down a long grass field, with

some suspicious looking willows at the bottom that betokened water.

"How does this animal like water, Marsden?" said I, as we raced along the field. "I don't quite know," was the answer I got; "Jones, my groom, says he's a rare good 'un at it, but Thompson, who sold him to me, said he would not face it, so I never quite like to ride him at it. By the way, there's a ford about a quarter of a mile down. Shall we go there, or chance it? What do you advise?" "At it," said I, not half liking the account of my steed, and hoping that Jones's opinion might prove the correct one. Alas! Thompson's diagnosis proved the truest, and for twenty long minutes did I make a ludicrous exhibition of myself, by riding madly at the brook, only to bring up dead short on the brink, or describe three parts of a circle to right or left. Eventually I had to give it up and go to the ford, after crossing which I vainly endeavoured to find the hounds. At last I was gladdened by the sight of a horseman in the distance coming my way; I'm in luck, thought I, they've turned, and I shall nick in again. Vain hope, it proved to be Sidney, who as he neared me, shouted, "I've come back to see if you are alive. I could not make up my mind whether to go on with the hounds or not. What would you have advised?" "Where are they?" I asked. "Running hard for the hills you see over there," said Sidney, pointing to some

high land in the horizon; "shall we go after them or home? What do you think?" I voted it no use indulging in a long stern chase, so we turned our nags' heads towards home, and I had ample time to exhaust my vocabulary of anathemas over Mr. Thompson's late quadruped: indeed, I could have reversed the sentence with pleasure and wished that it might have been the *late Mr. Thompson's* quad.

After a capital dinner, however, I forgot my troubles, and looked forward to a day's rough shooting on the morrow. Rough it was in every way. First, we walked up some furze, out of which we got four rabbits and a brace of partridges. Then Sidney held a council of war, whether we should drive some stubbles, which meant sitting in an east wind for three quarters of an hour, on the off chance of seeing one's neighbour miss; or proceed at once to beat the wood. After a deal of vacillation "The Wood" carried the day, and accordingly we commenced. I was put forward in a ride under a holly tree, and had for my neighbour a somewhat peppery colonel of militia. Sidney and his other guest, the M.P. for his side of the county, walked through the first strip with the beaters. I heard Sidney's voice halloaing to me, "Look out, old chap; hare forard. Shall I fire, or will you?" I could see no hare anywhere, so shouted back, "Shoot her yourself; only mind me." The next minute, whiz came a

charge of shot—all over, and round, and through my brown gaiters, causing me to dance like a cat on hot bricks, and use language that ought to have brought all the trees in the wood down. The penitent Sidney rushed up and by way of consolation said, "Dear! oh, dear! I *am* sorry. I mistook those leggings of yours for a hare. You ain't hurt much, are you? Won't die, will you? What do you think?" "Think?" replied I, indignantly, "I think you ought to be hung, or at least wear spectacles for the remainder of your days. I also think I am going out of this," which I did, notwithstanding my host's entreaties that I should stop. The rest of the afternoon I employed in picking various pellets of Number 6 shot out of my legs and registering vows never to shoot with Marsden again; indeed, I worked myself into quite a passion with him. However, he was so contrite at dinner that I soon forgot all about my feelings of revenge, and was able to laugh heartily at my mishap.

The next day we went horse-dealing as arranged, and Sidney's indecision was a caution. He never knew whether he liked a horse or not, or how much he ought to give, and the number of questions I had to answer and opinions to offer were beyond calculation. The first horse we looked at was a fine upstanding brown, almost faultless in shape, but with a vile-looking eye, and from the way the flesh at the corners of the mouth had hardened and grown callous

I felt sure he was a puller. After inspecting various other animals, Marsden returned to the brown, and I could see he was bitten with it. It was useless for me to point out the eye, or any other defect; he only turned to the owner and asked him "what he thought of it." Naturally the man was "jolly well sure nothing could touch 'im, 'e was like a lamb, and could jump hanythink as you put him at, and was dirt cheap at a 'undred."

Eventually we bought him at sixty-five sovs., and Sidney popped a saddle on the beast and told his luckless groom to ride him home quietly. No sooner was James (the groom) on his back than away he went with a bound, and how on earth the man managed to stick on has always been a mystery to me. However, stick he did, and for seven miles he went straight on end, till at last the brute was stopped by some men, and led back to Marsden's house. Even then he wanted to bolt again. Sidney's face when he saw his new purchase disappear was beautiful, and when he recovered his speech he said to me, "I am afraid I've been done; the horse is running away, is it not? What do you think?" I could not help laughing at the idea of his asking me whether I did not think it was running away, for it was unfortunately too evident.

We never could find our "Coper" friend again, but heard afterwards that the horse was a well-known one,

and had killed two men before, besides running away with a loaded haycart, into which it was put to try to tame it. I believe the playful creature is now to be seen in the plough wherever the land is very stiff, occasionally varying that occupation by a day's holiday in a two-ton roller. As I made my way back to my own diggings, after having promised Marsden to come again soon, I arrived at the conclusion that on the whole my three days with a vacillator had not been altogether a success.

THE END OF THE SEASON.

Yes, I'll ride the bay mare, she's the best of the lot—
'Tis the end of the fun; the last day that we've got.
Let us hope for a clinker from Hatherley Hollow,
With ourselves in the van—the rest they may follow.

No fence is too stiff, I will stake my best hat,
For she jumps like a greyhound, and creeps like a cat.
There's no horse in the country can touch her, I swear;
She laughs at the lot, does my little bay mare.

So bring her round sharp, I don't want to be late,
And a bustle to cover's a thing that I hate.
If they find in the gorse, it is "catch 'em who can;"
A stern chase is no pleasure for mare or for man.

There's Tom with the beauties, and there's the old Squire.
Ride over *his* hounds!—ain't the fat in the fire!
Get away, Merrylass! have a care now, 'ware horse!
Good morning, Sir John, shall we find in the gorse?

Ah! there's Thompson, and Brown, and old Giles on the grey;
All hard-riding farmers, who ne'er miss a day.
What a full meet it is! But, by Jove, there's a reason—
More's the pity—for this is the last of the season.

"Yoi! doit!" push 'em out, how they fly to Tom's voice!
The varmint must go, they don't leave him a choice.
Hark! that's Bonnibell's note; 'tis a find, for a crown!
That's music that beats all the bells of the town.

"Eugh! at him, my darlings!" It's right for the bottom.
Hold hard there; they'll head him, the thrusters, 'od rot 'em!
No. By Jove, he's away; there's Jim's cap in the air;
Give 'em room, please; and then you may ride as you dare.

"It's the dog," roars the old squire, as keen as a knife;
"By Gad, Sir, to-day he must run for his life.
I mean having his brush, let him go as he will;
The last of the season must end in a kill."

Forty minutes he gives us, as straight as a die;
But the pack at his heels, they can both hunt and fly.
Old Gaylass she has him! Whohoop! he's no more.
A clinker—whohoop!—and the season is o'er.

Take her round, John, the beauty! She's carried me well;
Never swerved from the line, never stumbled nor fell.
I said, in the field there was none to compare
To that best of all hunters, my little Bay Mare!

A TRIP TO BOULOGNE.

"HEAVE her short stay apeak and send the boat ashore for me at 9 sharp," were my orders to the sailing-master of the *Flora*, as we lay at anchor off Southsea one July morning in the year of grace 187–. I had arranged a trip across the Channel with three kindred spirits, one of whom, F——, I was just then preparing to meet at the station by the early train; the other two were to come down by the afternoon of the next day to Dover, from which place we proposed to take our departure. On arriving at the station I found the train in, but no F——, and on calling at the post-office I was presented with a telegram from him to this effect: "Unavoidably detained, will come down by midday-train, Dover, to-morrow."

Here was a nice prospect! a "thrash" the whole way by myself and no time to spare. However, it was no good crying over spilled milk, and at 9 A.M. punctually I proceeded to the landing-stage, where I found the boat,

with Dick the steward, sitting in the stern-sheets on a basket of provisions, that seemed large enough to victual one of Her Majesty's gunboats. He informed me that the Captain had gone up town to look after some of his gear, and that the other hand in the boat had gone to fetch him. I knew what that meant, so resigned myself to fate. After waiting a quarter of an hour the "hand" returned —of course without the object of his quest, but with evident signs of the proverbial "'alf pot" concealed about his person. After giving the absentee five minutes' grace I determined to start without him, and, much to my beery friend's astonishment, gave the order to shove off. Twenty minutes later we were under weigh, and had almost rounded the bell buoy when my attention was attracted by violent shouts from a shore boat that was evidently in hot chase of us. Luffing her up with her head-sheets a-weather enabled the now penitent and perspiring Captain (for it was he) to come up with us, and meek and lamb-like he came aboard, having with great reluctance paid the boatman half his demand, the controversy being cut short by the yacht's sails filling and her forging ahead. He was evidently much surprised at the audacity of what he considered "a land lubber" in daring to go to sea without his august presence, but it did him a world of good, and he thought it better to keep his own counsel, as he knew he was in the wrong.

The voyage round to Dover was without much incident, save and except the carrying away in the middle of the night of the "head sheets" of Dick's hammock, thereby precipitating the occupant all among the pots and pans, and causing an exceeding amount of consternation and cups and saucers "expended." It was 6 A.M. before we brought up in "the Wick," and right glad was I to turn in and snatch an hour's sleep. I was not allowed any more, as the now too-energetic captain insisted on holy-stoning and generally washing and brushing up just as I was comfortable. After breakfast I went ashore to meet F——, and replenish my diminished china cupboard. Punctual to time F—— arrived, and having sorted out his kit from the rest of the luggage we went aboard.

It may be as well to mention that F—— was not what would be called a first-class sailor, his experience of the sea being principally acquired on board a packet-boat, and once he had been as far as Malta in the P. & O. However, he professed to enjoy yachting immensely, and was very confident of his own powers of withstanding "the thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to" when the same flesh finds itself on the ocean wave.

On arriving alongside I became sensible of two facts: one that the wind had changed and was blowing dead in, and the other, and perhaps more unpleasant one, that for some unknown reason the whole place smelt most

outrageously. Over the first I had no control, but the second I determined Master Dick should answer for; so hailing him, I enquired what in the name of all that's merciful had happened; and from the pantry came the response, "Only some salt codfish I bought for our dinner, sir, and I'm main feared it wern't salted soon enough." A few moments later in he came to the saloon, bearing aloft some of the offending material. This was *too much*, and up the companion I went, followed by F——, who stove his hat in against the hatchway, and descended with great precision into the arms of Dick below. From my coin of 'vantage on deck I insisted on the whole of the salt codfish being consigned to a watery grave; and the motion by this time having become perceptible, F—— proposed that we should go ashore for a stroll. "Not that the sea has anything to do with my feeling queer, but that awful fish you know, old man, I could not sit *downstairs* any more!" Seing the inevitable result of a refusal, I acceded to his request, and we went and had a quiet game of billiards (where F—— was much more at home) until it was time to meet the rest.

My two expected guests were good sailors. C——, the elder, had owned a beautiful 28-tonner for many years, until a wife and family required his more immediate attention, and B——, the other one, was known to his friends as "the skipper," for he had been brought up at sea, and

had left his profession for the pleasures of the turf—not that he ever won much, unless it was when he ran one of his renowned stud at Hampton, or some other suburban meeting; but he used to talk a deal about it, and was never so happy as when he managed to fix you into a corner and alternately dilate on the mysteries of "Ruff's Guide" and the intricacies of "the Channel Pilot."

At five o'clock they both arrived, and the first words B—— spoke on tumbling out of the train was, "C—— and I are not going to sail to-night; it's going to blow great guns, and we've made up our minds not to trust our lives across under your guidance." I smiled at the last sentence, as I knew my friend too well to think I should be allowed to put in a word, or give an order, other than the opening of a fresh bottle of whisky, so long as "the skipper" was anywhere handy. F—— thought it a good opening, and began to twit them on their sailing propensities. However, we voted for dinner ashore, and see what it was like after; anyhow we must sleep on board, and could start in the morning. So accordingly we adjourned to the Castle, ordered dinner, and sent off the traps. By the time we had finished our second bottle of—well, they called it claret, it was pretty evident that B——'s words had come true, and it *was* blowing great guns, with a nasty sea rolling right into the "Wick," rendering it perfectly impossible to lay there. On getting aboard I

asked them what they would do? Smooth water under Grisnez, or stay where they were and be knocked about like corks? The question was decided by B——, who had thrown himself down on his bunk, declaring his intention of going to sleep, when a heavier roll than usual sent him flying bodily on to the cabin floor. Picking himself up, like the Delphic oracle, he exclaimed, "Confound it all, three reefs down, and, Grisnez—I've broke my back" (it turned out to be only his watch-glass). F——, pale as a sheet, followed suit, and said, "anywhere where its smooth," while C——, wedging himself in, with a tumbler in one hand and the whisky bottle in the other, confined himself to the laconic remark—"This is real jam."

It was a wet job getting the anchor up, and as we cleared the Admiralty Pier we shipped a green one, which washed all the spare gear on deck adrift, and quite finished F——, who lay amongst the *débris* wet through and as sick as a dog. He had only just been driven out of the cabin by the fumes of C——'s pipe and the whisky bottle, and had emerged from the companion hatch just in time to catch the full volume of water as it poured aft, and knocked him head over heels. "The skipper" going to pick him up and console him was unable to get anything from him but "Oh, dear! oh, dear! how long will this last? O-o-oh dear!" as he succumbed again to the "motion of the ocean." Eventually he retired below, a

limp and helpless being, and braving the terrors of the tobacco-smoke, turned into his bunk "all standing"—that is with his boots and all on. About four A.M. we brought up into smooth water and prepared to turn in. C—— having gone fast asleep in the chair, still clutching the bottle, was promptly bonneted, and thinking that he had been knocked over by the main boom or something, he jumped up, shouting loudly, "Stand from under, confound it, who slacked the topping lift?" This awoke the unhappy F——, who, finding things generally steadier, feebly asked for a cup of tea, which I managed to get for him, lacing it well with brandy.

At seven A.M. we all tumbled over the side to bathe, and after breakfast, up anchor and into Boulogne harbour, "The skipper," seriously puzzling the *Capitaine du Port* by his attempts at the French language, of which he was by no means a master.

By the time we were safely moored in the inner basin, F—— had quite recovered, and was all activity, pulling and hauling, generally at some "standing part," and getting in everybody's way. To keep him quiet, I told him to ship the ensign staff, and to every one's intense amusement he got hold of a spare topsail yard and endeavoured to ship it through one of the hawse pipes aft. He was hardly more successful at whist afterwards, for he commenced by trumping his partner's best, and

wound up by revoking twice, on each occasion C—— being his associate. After spending three cheery days in Boulogne we had to get back, and heaving out of the basin and down between the piers about eight P.M., we stood up for Grisnez.

Soon after we started the wind died away, and down came a channel fog as thick as pea-soup; so we decided to bring up and keep the fog-horn going. So thick was it that though we knew we were close under Grisnez we could not see the light. I took the first watch, and had gone below to get a tot of grog about 11.30, when I was startled by the most unearthly row on deck, and a shout of "Tumble up, sir! there's a big steamer close aboard us." Rushing on deck, followed by the other three, all in the scantiest of attire, I found Jim, one of the hands, standing on the heel of the jib-boom doing his little best on the fog-horn, and nearly cracking his cheeks, while right ahead was flaming out the Cape light.

"You thundering ass," said I; "what are you bellowing at?" "There, sir," replied he; "a big steamer, sir, coming into us." "Steamer yourself," growled the irate captain, who had been roused out of his sweet slumbers, together with all hands; "don't yer know a lighthouse when you see one? You'd better ship as a lamp-trimmer on board a light-ship till you get your eyes into working order, you son of a sea cook, you. Oh, go below and

hide yourself, do," as the abashed Jim slunk away. In half an hour more the fog cleared off, and we got under weigh for Dover, where we arrived without further adventure, and after a parting glass B—— and F—— went ashore, *en route* for London, while C—— and I stood on for Ramsgate.

Thus ended a most amusing trip, though I doubt if I or any one else will catch F—— trusting himself to the eccentricities of the "sad sea waves" again in a hurry, and it will be some time before he forgets the "doing" he had on his trip to Boulogne.

CRICKET UNDER DIFFICULTIES.

It was not so many years ago that the following circumstances occurred, which may, in some degree, show that incivility in the cricket-field is not entirely confined to the other side of the world.

I was engaged to play for my county against Shropshire, and accordingly a couple of days before the match I put myself and traps into a first-class carriage on the London and North-Western Railway bound for Birmingham, near which town I was about to stay. On arriving at my destination I found my host, Walters, with his trap waiting for me, and he then told me the match was "off," as the Shropshire people could not get a team. "Well, old chap," said I, "you might have sent me a wire instead of dragging me down here for nothing, for although I am deuced glad to see you, I confess I should not have paid the price of a return ticket to do so, as anyway we should meet next week at Lord's." "Never mind," he replied,

"it's all right; I have arranged a match and got you a place. We go down to-morrow to play for Birmingham, against Kidderminster. It will be perhaps rather rough, as it is a professional team, and there is a good deal of jealousy between the carpet-weavers and the Brummagem lot. Jump in, and—here's a weed—I'll tell you about it as we drive home."

Thus adjured, I got my bag and portmanteau aboard, and we started. Walters always prided himself on having a trotter that could pass anything on the road, and the way we rattled through the streets of the town was a caution to snakes. However, to my intense relief we got clear without any accident, save running over a dog, which, Walters said, "would be a lesson to it for the future." When we had got into the country I found breath enough to ask, who, what, when, and where the eleven of the morrow were composed of; and I found they were, with the exception of three, all professors, and all the pick of the town. "You will have to keep wicket," said Walters; "I have told them you are a wonder; but you'd better put on an extra thick pair of gloves, for P—— is going to bowl, and he is one of the fastest in England." Pleasant! thought I, to have a false reputation made to hand with an eighty-one ton gun firing at one, and the probability of losing Birmingham the match, also; besides the chance of getting damaged, the certainty of getting

abused. However, it was a case of in for a penny in for a pound. "What time do we go?" I asked. "Leave my house at seven, breakfast six-thirty, train leaves Birmingham at eight," was the reply. "Oh Lord! this is worse and worse," I remarked. "You know I hate getting up early, and breakfast at 6.30 is a farce." "Never mind," continued Walters; "you can get some bread and cheese on the way, Tom S—— is sure to have some in his pocket, and as for getting up, if you like we will make a night of it. I'll get Thompson and Moore over, and we can have a rubber after the missus has gone to bed." This proposition I vetoed at once, for I had visions of what eccentricities a cricket ball might be guilty after what Walters termed "a night of it;" so dinner over, and having smoked a quiet weed in the smoking-room, I retired to rest, with a vague hope that it might rain on the morrow.

No such luck. At five A.M. my bed clothes disappeared, and I was forcibly ejected on to the floor, with the words "Turn out and have a dip in the pond" ringing in my ears. Now to be suddenly and violently awoke is in itself a bad enough commencement, but when it means trotting down a gravel path, over some grass wet with morning dew, in the scantiest of raiment, winding up with a tumble into a cold pond, it is a little *too* much, and my feelings were not enviable at all. I'm afraid I used some strongish

language, and if I did not go so far as to abuse mine host, I can answer for it, I d—d the pond incontinently. However, he was imperturbable, and in a few moments two solitary figures (*à la* James!) might be seen wending their way to the abode of the water lilies. Walters had got 6 to 4 the best of me, for he had arrayed himself in a long Ulster coat and flannels, whereas I had on but a thin Jersey, a pair of dress trousers, and slippers that would come off. However, Nemesis overtook Walters, for when we arrived at the pond, with great pride he showed me a coracle that he had just bought, a machine warranted to turn over at the shortest notice: and as I expressed doubts as to its stability, he volunteered to show me that I was wrong, and jumping in shoved off to look round his trimmers that he had set over night.

Meanwhile I divested myself of my apparel, and prepared to take a header. Just as I was about to dive in, I noticed one of the trimmers upside down, and showing evident signs of a fish; so I shouted to Walters and pointed it out. To my intense surprise and amusement he gave a wild flourish with his paddle, there was a heavy splash, and the next moment the coracle was floating bottom upwards like a gigantic tortoise, while poor Walters, looking for all the world like a sea lion, and terribly hampered by his ulster, was making the best of his way to the shore. I almost died of laughing, but

seeing him nearly go under, I jumped in and helped him along. When he got out, and had somewhat recovered his breath and the effects of the water he had swallowed, he used the most awful language to the unfortunate coracle, and vowed he would never get in it again. "Why," said I, "I thought it could not turn over!" a remark which so incensed him, that he ran off to the house to change without deigning a reply, leaving me to bring the cause of the mishap to shore.

After I had accomplished this feat, and secured the trimmer, which proved to hold a 9lb. jack, I followed, and found mine host somewhat mollified awaiting me with breakfast on the table. I had just time to get into my clothes and swallow some coffee with a bit of toast, when the trap was announced, and we bowled away to the station. On our arrival on the platform, at 7.45 A.M., we were greeted by the rest of the team, and were expected to stand a drink all round. Out of the nine gentlemen who attended before the refreshment bar (just opening, by the way) six professed a desire for "three of cold gin," one for "a go down of brown brandy," while the remaining two solaced themselves with "a little rum and milk." To my way of thinking it seemed a queer breakfast, and not one particularly to be recommended for heavy scoring. However, it was evident that they were accustomed to such light refreshment, and in a few minutes numerous

clay pipes were in full blast. Presently there was a most apparent smell of onions overpowering the gin, tobacco, and rum, and looking round, I saw the umpire engaged in eating an enormous hunch of bread, with a still bigger onion as "a relish" to it, both of which he held in one hand, while in the other he grasped a "cutty clay." Luckily, the train came in, and Walters and I took our seats in a first-class carriage, turning a deaf ear to the solicitations to make one of the party in the third-class compartment. Walters would have gone, I believe, had not the sight and smell of the oniony umpire, who was most pressing on the subject, acted as a powerful deterrent.

"You'd better com along wi' us," said he, "there'll be lots of fun. Tom 'ere 'as 'is fleute, and P—— ay con sing to roights, beside we might do a bit o' Nap." "Jump in, Parsons, or you'll be left behind," was our only reply. "My heavens! how the man can eat onions at eight o'clock in the morning," ejaculated Walters; "it's awful! Open that window, like a good chap." At that moment the guard whistled and off we went, and for the next half-hour were enlivened by the strains of Tom's "fleute," though I confess that Parsons's ideas and mine on the subject of P——'s vocal powers did not coincide, for he had but one note in his voice, and, like the tenor in the village choir, when he once got on to it there was

no getting him off again. Eventually we arrived all safe at Kidderminster, and had to tramp up to the ground, outside of which was a small public, where our antagonists were waiting, and were not very sparing in their criticisms on our personal appearance.

The advent of P——, the vocalist and fast bowler, was the signal for the first of the shindies, for they one and all declared that he "shouldna plee; domned if he should; a wanna a Brummagem chap, and they'd fight sooner nor let him bowl at 'em."

Eventually matters were arranged by a compromise, and it was decided P—— was not to bowl, for which small mercy I was mighty glad. We won the toss, and Tom S—— and I went in. Tom was an undoubtedly fine bat, and notwithstanding the "three of cold gin" made 63, while I managed to obtain 26 before I was caught. Walters came next, and led off by hitting two sixes clean over the pavilion, and then succumbed to a shooting half volley. Eventually Birmingham were all out for 186, and we fell to work on the luncheon. As soon as we had finished the "cold collation" they sent in their crack man, a great hulking fellow, who swaggered into the ground with a "see how I shall do it" air. After a deal of preparation and guard, taken with mathematical accuracy, he received the first ball, and to his intense disgust flick went his leg-bail high in the air, and

he retired moodily to his compatriots. The next ball resulted in another wicket, and there were ominous signs of a storm brewing. The ground was fast filling with weavers, and "2 wickets, 0 runs; last man, 0," was more than they could stand. The next over from our medium pace bowler was a climax; for, after scoring a fourer from the first ball, the elated batsman went out to drive an off ball, miscalculated the brake, and I stumped him.

"How's that?" "Out," said Parsons, when a roar from the assembled multitude of "It's a domned lie, a wanna out!" "Go back, lad, they shanna put thee out!" interrupted the harmony of the proceedings. The irate weavers poured over the wicket, and the wrangle assumed a formidable aspect. Eventually peace was restored and they retired, bearing their martyr with them. One gentleman coming up to me and shoving a far from cleanly fist under my nose, exclaimed, "Look 'ere, young sonny, if you goes kidding any more of our blokes out, I'll just smash yer!"

After this little episode the luck turned, and with nine wickets down they had 182 runs, leaving the last man to make four to tie and five to win. At this crisis I got a ball in the face, and had to run out to get a bit of ice to stop my nose bleeding, and the only sympathy I met with was, "Wish it had killed yer; yer kidded Brown

out." When I returned to my post it wanted six minutes to time, and five runs still to get. They were for eking out the time, but Parsons insisted on calling play. The second ball was snicked for two amid loud cheers; the third and fourth carefully played back, and the last ball of the over the man stepped out to cut. It came off the shoulder of his bat very fast and high. I saw it for a second, put up my hand, and to my intense astonishment I found the ball sticking there, and the match won by two runs. The scene that followed was indescribable. We had to fight our way to the pavilion, get our bags, and make our way down to the station, followed by a hooting mob and an occasional friendly stone. The genial individual who was so anxious for me to inspect his fist, was too drunk to do very much, and the last I saw of him was prone in a ditch. We just caught the train, and had only time to fling ourselves pell-mell into a third-class, where I had to sit out the journey on Parsons's knee. About half way a bottle of gin was produced, and song and mirth held high revel till vanquished by the potent "Old Tom" and sleep.

When I found myself again at Walters's house we both looked at one another and uttered two words, with which I think most will agree, viz., "Never again." Needless to say that that vow has never been broken. No, not even "hardly ever."

THE BENARES BOBBERY HOUNDS.

In the year 18— I found myself at Benares, an up-country station in India; hot as egg-flip in the summer, but in the cold season, which commenced about the end of October or beginning of November, a very congenial climate. It was by no means a dull quarter; for besides a fair sprinkling of civil servants, there were, a battery of artillery, head-quarters of a cavalry regiment, half a battalion of my own corps, and a regiment of native infantry. A jollier lot of fellows could hardly be got together anywhere, and right merrily we passed the time with shooting, pig-sticking, cricket, and amateur theatricals; for we numbered among us some talent that would not have disgraced the boards of a London theatre. Our low comedian especially was "a fellow of infinite jest," poor C——, of the commissariat (for in those days they had not got as far as calling themselves "Deputy Assistant Commissary Generals of Control"). I remember if ever

there was a "wait" of unusual length, generally caused by the inability of "Rahmah-Gee" (our scene-shifter) to realize the fact that the interior of a baronial hall was not the same thing as a brigand's cave, poor C—— was invariably sent on with some property hastily snatched up to sing a comic song; and one night he fairly brought down the house when singing "The Cure," by a sudden disappearance through the trap, which gave way without warning. Though out of sight he could scarcely be called out of mind, as language was heard to issue from below that would hardly have passed Mr. Pigott's censure. I call him *poor* C——, for some months after I left India I heard that he had been thrown from his horse and killed.

However, notwithstanding all these amusements, we yearned for something new, and at last a brilliant idea was hit upon by myself and another man, F—— of the Hussars, which was to start a "bobbery pack." Now our bobbery pack was, as is customary, somewhat after the fashion of an indignation meeting—rather a mixed affair. The dogs were all shapes and sizes, of every kind and breed, from the legitimate fox-hound to the native pariah with ears strongly resembling those of a donkey—as the following description will show. However, we spared no pains, and set about organizing the pack with a will. Our first purchase was two couple of draft hounds from

the P.V.H., out of which lot one died of horse heel the first day of his arrival—that is to say, he incautiously made too close an inspection of a "Tattoo's" hind feet, and got his brains kicked out for his imprudence. The remaining couple and a half, nevertheless, were sufficient for our purpose, and they were named respectively Carpenter, Bachelor, and Melody—though between ourselves, I firmly believe that they would have answered equally well to Shem, Ham, and Japhet. Next came a very queer-looking animal, whose breed would have puzzled most of our canine judges. He was a bit of everything—a bull-dog's head, donkey's ears, greyhound's back, and a tail—well it was a cross between a poker and a corkscrew, as the fancy took him. He rejoiced in the name of Traveller, and ill-natured jealousy was wont to say that he travelled home a deal oftener than after a jackal, for that was our "varmint." Besides these, we had an assortment of bull-dogs, lurchers, one greyhound, a great brown setter, and, last of all, the mainstay of the pack, my own little brace of fox-terriers, Jim and Vic; but as these names were voted not sporting enough, in the field they were known as Gaylad and Columbine.

All through the hot weather F—— and I were to be seen at 4.30 A.M. or 6 P.M. exercising our heterogeneous pack in couples, with the native whip on foot, whose duty it was to see that the partners did not eat each other when

one insisted on going one side of an obstacle, and the other preferred the other side, both being brought up short by the couples, and, of course, imagining each other to blame. We had sundry adventures, however, such as the whole pack going off full cry, coupled up as they were, after an unfortunate cat, and dashing into a native hut, causing the deuce and all to pay among the "chatties;" or, as once happened to me when taking them past the parade of the native infantry, they suddenly "went for" a Sepoy's dog, and charging bang into the middle of the parade, upset Sepoys and Subadars indiscriminately, the couples acting like chain-shot, and catching them about the centre of the shins. It was a funny sight that reminded me strongly of ninepins; nevertheless, if the C. O. had cut up rough it might have proved awkward for the future of the pack; but he was a good sort and said nothing about it. With a deal of hard work and whipcord we managed to get them into tolerable order, and having duly advertized the meet at 5 A.M. second milestone on the Hurrwah road, we went to bed early and dreamed of the sport we were going to show.

It fell to my lot to carry the horn on our opening day, and punctual to the minute I arrived with the pack. Everything correct, hunting-cap, green coat, brass buttons, and the native Whip resplendent in an old pink. There was a goodly company assembled to criticize the first per-

formance, and as I had made arrangements with a crafty old Hindoo to have a bagman ready in a certain sugar khate, I anticipated no mishap.

After a suitable interval, I trotted off with the pack all round me, quite orthodox; but, as bad luck would have it, a wandering native soor (pig) crossed the road. This was too much for the B.B.H., and notwithstanding all my efforts, accompanied by a most heartrending and soul-stirring *capriccio* on the horn, off they went amid the shouts of laughter of the whole field, the native whip who tried to head them getting an awful cropper right over the pig, which "jinked" or turned short under his pony's nose. In the middle of it all, my crafty Hindoo appeared with a very tell-tale looking bag, shouting at the top of his voice that the jackal had gone, and that he was "burah tunda" (very cold). Certainly he had the effect of stopping the hounds, for "Carpenter" winding the bag, gave tongue, and in a minute the whole pack were off after my sable patriot, who legged it for bare life to the nearest tree he could find, up which he literally flew, leaving his garment (for he had but one) at the foot to the tender mercies of "Carpenter," while he himself, having attained a respectable height, sat gibbering for all the world like an ape at the dogs who were baying round the tree. Like a hero he still held on to the bag, not recognizing it as the cause of his mishap, but venting his

feelings on his ancestors, to whom he kept on imputing fearful crimes, and informing all it might concern, that he was suffering for their sins, that there was hardly a respectable member of his family save himself, and that he should require a large sum of money for the loss of his clothing (!) and damage done to his nerves.

When I had recovered my breath and stopped laughing, I managed by a series of view holloas and the assistance of J. P., the sporting Assistant Surgeon, to get the pack turned, and having found out from the sable one's son, where his father had loosed the varmint, I luckily hit off the scent. Away we went over a mud wall, which disposed of three sportsmen, right for the river, where to my joy I viewed, as did the non-hunting dogs of the pack (they were distinguished as "smell dogs" and "non-smell dogs," *i.e.*, those who hunted by scent and those who only ran by sight), the jackal stealing along quite happy. Determined to do or die, I pulled my horse together, cheered on the hounds, and executing another solo on the horn, went as hard as I could for the place where I last saw him. By this time the sun was getting up, and all scent was gone. So without stopping, I galloped on in the direction of the station, keeping the pack going with an occasional "chink" of music. After about two miles I saw a convenient patch of sugar-cane, into which I pretended to have run the brute; and making a long cast I

pulled out my watch, looked at the sun, and asked whether the field would like to "draw for another or go home?" Of course every one voted for home, and long afterwards they used to say what a capital run they had had on the opening day of the B.B. Hounds! The *secret* of the run I took good care to keep to myself.

Needless to say, on future occasions we were always careful to have two or more bagmen, and cautiously avoided piggy places. By this means we showed fair sport. When I left the station the hounds were taken over, and for aught I know are still to the fore. But, *Eheu! fugaces*, this is some time ago, and I fear me that poor "Traveller's" ears are waving in other happy hunting-grounds, and doubtless the "sable patriot" has ere this joined the ranks of those ancestors he reviled so bitterly when he found himself up a tree. If so, let us hope he tendered them a humble apology, and explained that being hunted by the B.B.H. was sufficient excuse for any disrespect of which he might have been guilty.

OUR PIG-STICKING CLUB.

MANY a line has been penned and many a stanza composed in honour of that most useful of animals, the pig. Poets have depicted him as a medium for sport, and fond mothers have intruded on his domestic affairs in a most reckless manner. In the former instance he is described as "The boar, the boar, the mighty boar;" in the latter he is more familiarly treated in the well-known story, as exemplified on the fingers for the benefit of young hopeful, of "how one piggy went to market while the other stayed at home." However, my business was more in the "mighty boar line," as I mounted my tat (pony) and prepared to answer the following summons: "Dear ——, come down to the racquet court; we are thinking of getting up some pig-sticking. There is some A1 pig ground about five miles off, and Q—— is as keen as mustard."

On arriving at the trysting-place I found a goodly

company assembled, in the midst of whom was Q——, who had replenished his glass for the fifth time with his favourite drink, to wit, a very small dash of brandy, a very large lump of ice, and a bottle of tonic water. Thus armed, he was holding forth on the delights of "honks," "sounders," "first spears," and pork in general. Q—— was Assistant Commissioner, a tall thin man with somewhat of a Yankee drawl; an excellent sportsman, either with rifle or in the saddle, and a thorough good fellow all round. It was but natural that he should be the centre figure of the group, as on him would devolve the whole management of the "honk" (beat), for in his official capacity he exercised no small power, and duly instilled the fear of the law into the mind of the mild Hindoo, whether Rajah or Coolie.

Opposite him was seated, in an easy chair, F——, the magnate of the place, the Commissioner Sahib, who had arrived a few days before, and was well known as one of the best spears and hardest riders in Bengal; indeed it was he who first started the idea of pig-sticking. The rest of the company were made up of officers, civil engineers, magistrates, an indigo planter or two, and, last but not least, the Postmaster, a gentleman who described himself as an Englishman, but whose speech and colour were decided contradictions to his statement; moreover, as he walked somewhere about 15 stone, and

hated the sight of a horse, he was, to say the least of it, rather in the way. After some animated discussion a committee was formed, and Q——, by universal acclamation, appointed Secretary. Every member enrolled on the books of the Pig-Sticking Club had to deposit 10 rupees, equal to about a sovereign English money, and was bound to contribute his share towards the expenses of the hunt besides.

For a week nothing was talked of but the projected expedition, and every mail brought bundles of spears, boots, saddles, spurs, and a hundred-and-one articles that were afterwards found to be of no earthly use. Even the stout postmaster was afflicted with the pig fever, and purchased from D——, the station medico, a weight carrying hunter, on which he might be seen at early morn and dusky twilight vainly endeavouring to learn the art of equitation, though he sadly wanted what the British tar is pleased to call "stays fore and aft," and ofttimes found himself very "shifting ballast."

At last the longed-for day arrived, and tents, servants, and food, having been sent on, together with our horses, we the club prepared to follow. The programme was to sleep in camp, and the next morning to be in the saddle betimes for our opening day against the aforesaid "mighty boar." Everything seemed propitious; and Q—— was in a wild state of excitement; however, he

proved the only sensible man of the party, for he declined to attend the festive entertaiment prepared for us, viz., our dinner, on the plea of having to look after those "budmarsh" servants; and off he started only to return in a quarter of an hour, with a face that would not have disgraced a Turner's sun, to tell us that he had found the whole posse of servants (who, by the way had set out three hours before) seated about half a mile out of the station discussing the fragrant hubble bubble. Having treated them to a symphony in leather in the shape of his cutting whip, he had returned to vent his wrath on the jemmedar (head) of police, in whose charge he had placed the advanced guard, and who had basely deserted his post for the seductions of the bazaar, in order, as he (the jemmedar) said, in the flowery language of the East, "to ascertain that all the instructions which your worship had deigned to give to the dogs of coolies have been faithfully carried our to your lordship's satisfaction;" which being interpreted, meant simply: deuced hot day and jemmedar wanted to smoke.

After an hour's delay, however, Q—— made another start and we sat down to dinner. Alas! that dinner was the cause of most of our ills. The wine circulated freely, and it was not until after numerous speeches that a climax was arrived at by young G——, of the Hussars, volunteering to sing, which act of benevolence will be more

appreciated, when it is understood that in the ordinary routine of everyday life, "God Save the Queen" and "Stables" conveyed to his ear almost identical sounds. However it had the effect of rousing us all to a sense of having made a trifle too free with "Giesler's creaming," and a general move was made for the tented field: some in buggies, some in "ticka gharees" (the native growler of the period), which vehicle was always a subject of ambition to "tool" *after dinner*, and as it was for the most part composed of remains tied together with ancient cordage, the usual result was—collapse after a few hundred yards.

It fell to my lot to drive with D——, the doctor, in his buggy, into which he had put for the first time what he called his "roadster," a villanous-looking white horse with the straightest of shoulders, an insane desire to go any way but the right one, and an eye that looked all round the corner. As a further embellishment he gloried in a pink nose, and evident marks of dye on the tail made it more than certain that he had, at some not very distant time, carried a native swell.

Now D—— was certainly, to put it in the mildest terms, *very jolly*, and the reckless way we swung out of the "compound" gates filled me with misgiving. D——, however, said it "washallright," and insisted on shaking me by the hand, during which manœuvre he

managed to drop his reins, and away went old pink nose at full steam, taking the side of a wall in his mad career, the effect of which was to send Ram Bux, the syce (groom), flying some dozen yards on to his back. For about two miles the road was straight, so that all I had to do was to hold on and keep D—— aboard the ship; but at the end of that distance the way lay down a narrow lane with ruts some thirteen inches deep. Into this we floundered on one wheel, and a few yards further on the gallant steed falling head over heels, we found ourselves transformed into sky rockets of the first order. However no bones were broken, and all we could do was to pick up the pieces and find out our bearings, a difficult job on a dark night with both lamps out and a somewhat confused recollection of things in general. Luckily at this crisis Ram Bux appeared, rather gone in the sinews but still able to go ahead, and by our united efforts we managed to right the concern and proceed on our way, leading the now subdued steed, and inwardly cursing "Giesler's champagne."

At about 3 A.M. we arrived at the camp, where the first thing I did was to catch my foot in a tent rope, and shooting through the open flap alighted bang on the top of the sleeping Q——. Whether he was dreaming of pig I know not, but the next instant I was seized in his powerful grasp and nearly strangled, while he kept holloaing

out at the top of his voice, "Here, help! d——d pig's goring me!" By a stroke of luck I managed to get clear and explain matters, and we then discovered that out of the eighteen that had started after dinner, only fourteen, including ourselves, had arrived; and it was not until two hours later, when we were all preparing to move off, that the luckless four turned up, dripping wet, having been overturned into a "jheel" (pond) by young G—— who insisted on driving.

After they had changed and swallowed a cup of laced coffee, we sallied forth in two divisions, one under the command of F——, the Commissioner, and the other in charge of Q——, with my medico, D——, to act as deputy in his absence. On arriving at the ground we were drawn up in line and initiated into the mysteries of pig-sticking. No one was to ride a sow under penalty of a five rupee fine, and any one guilty of sticking a squeaker was to pay ten rupees to the fund, and be debarred from riding again that day.

Opposite us was a large patch of jungle, on the further side of which were marshalled a noble army of beaters under the jemmedar of police, whose red turban could be seen flitting about like a large firefly among the "tom-tom wallahs"—*Anglicé* drummers—awaiting the signal from Q—— to begin. Then came the drawing of lots as to which party were to ride first, for the two columns were

further divided into sections of three, who were to keep together during the day. We filed off right and left of the jungle, leaving the one side open. The signal was given and the "honk" began. A more appalling noise than a mixture of tom-toms, cow-horns, shouts, and firing matchlocks with powder, could not well be imagined, and very soon arose the shout from the inside of "soor! soor!" (pig, pig); a few moments later out came a sounder, with a good old boar leading. I had been lucky enough to draw a lot among the first three, and as the signal was given we dashed off—my party consisting of Q——, a young civil engineer, and myself. I knew it was hopeless to get the first spear from Q——, who was an old performer, but I hoped to be able to run second.

The first thing that astonished me was the pace a pig can go, the next that my nag did not come on his nose every minute, for the ground was simply awful; luckily there was no time to look much at it. We were all three neck and neck and as excited as possible, when the boar "jinked," or turned short back, and came right under my horse. Fortunately for me he had been at the game before, and jumped high enough to clear a five-barred gate, thus avoiding being ripped.

The order of battle was now changed, and Q——, who had anticipated piggy's proceedings, got a long start, and was closing up rapidly, when a wild-looking figure in a

turban and long yellow boots, brandishing an enormous lance, burst on our astounded gaze. On it came yelling like a maniac, and cutting right across Q——'s track; both were lost in a cloud of dust, piggy meanwhile making good his retreat into a long belt of jungle on the left. On coming up to the cloud we found Q—— examining his horse, which was happily unhurt, as himself, and a few yards off lay the portly form of the postmaster! who displayed his nationality and signalled his escape by the most piteous groans, while in the distance might be seen his weight-carrying hunter making the best of his way home.

When that worthy had recovered his wind sufficiently to speak, he commenced with a few scathing remarks on things in general, and wound up with, "Arree, what say, you call that pig-sticking! d—n pig-sticking. Injure my interior very bad, never eat again." However, he was not proof against some brandy which I had in a flask, and his temper getting a little better, it turned out that after the morning mail had come in he had armed himself *cap-à-pie*, and knowing the locality, galloped off to join in the fun. Seeing Q—— in full chase he thought he might become the hero of the day if he managed to "catch the pig" (as he put it) first. *Hinc illæ lacrymæ.* Having started our parti-coloured friend off to the camp to collect his scattered faculties, we proceeded to follow up

the boar, and with some little trouble managed to dislodge him, when he gave us another exciting gallop, in which of course Q—— obtained all the honour and glory.

While all this was going on the rest of the club were having good sport, as pork was very plentiful, and while we were measuring our first victim our attention was attracted by a deal of shouting and the sight of the remainder of the horsemen, apparently engaged in tilting at a tree after the fashion of Don Quixote. Clapping spurs to our nags, we soon arrived on the scene of action, and found the whole *posse comitatus*, charging by turns a veritable fighting boar, which, notwithstanding three spears sticking in his back "like quills upon the fretful porcuine," had ripped four horses badly, and was equal to doing the same by as many more. A well-planted spear by F—— finished him however, and he succumbed to the inevitable.

This brought the day's sport to a close, and we counted five boars, including the old fighting tusker, one squeaker which no one would own, and a sow that young G—— swore his horse had killed, though a tell-tale wound was decidedly spear-like, and cost G—— five rupees. Considering we were nearly all novices, it was not so bad, and heartily did we congratulate each other, at our late breakfast in camp, on the success of our opening day. After breakfast, tents were struck and we returned to the station;

on which journey I took care to avoid "pink nose" and D——'s buggy, thereby arriving safe and sound. I often think as I look at the tusk of the old fighting boar, which forms the handle of a paper knife on my table, that the opening day of "Our Pig-sticking Club" was, notwithstanding all mishaps, one of the most cheery I ever spent.

OUR RACES.

I HAVE always held that the leading characteristic of the English nation could be spelt in five letters, viz., sport. In some shape or form every man, or nearly every one, is a sportsman. Even want of money, and consequently of a mount, will not stop men, and where they cannot afford to ride to hounds they will, in many instances, run with them.

Perhaps nowhere is the love of sport so conspicuous as in India, which is a veritable nursery-garden in this respect. Those who have never backed a horse or held a gun in their mother-country, return after two or three years of the "gorgeous East," accomplished horsemen, and good shots. Racing is an institution that flourishes in India like "a green bay tree." Nearly every station has its regular meeting, besides what are called "sky meetings" or scratch affairs, got up in the station itself, men from a few neighbouring places sending a horse or

two. They are great fun, and the class of nag would rather astonish even a West Drayton sportsman in its worst days.

I was unfortunate enough to be secretary once, and besides an infinity of trouble, I found at the end of the meeting my balance on the wrong side, for some native gentlemen, who had put down their names for a "Native Gentlemen's Purse" did not pay up; and my bearer, or *valet de chambre*, thought it a fine opportunity for feathering his nest, and bolted with my tin box containing all the entrances for the day. However, my endeavour will be to describe, not sky races (presumedly originally "scurry races,") but the real legitimate up-country meeting as it was when I was at B———

In those days I was a light weight, and as such had lots of work getting horses into trim for coming events. We were very "racy" in my bungalow, where I lived with three others. Every morning at an early hour might be seen seven or eight horses, sometimes ten, walking round in a circle with a syce (groom) perched on the top of each, looking as uncomfortable as possible, like a monkey on a dog; the stud groom, an Englishman, and full private, standing in the middle of the ring letting fall a few home truths as occasion required. Inside the house was an assortment of saddles, bridles, whips, weights, and all the paraphernalia of a training stable,

while at the back we had made a small steeple chase course, where we used to train for the "jump races." Many a laugh have I had at the water jump, which was kept regularly filled, and which it was a point of honour to make every one who came into the "compound" go at and very often go into. Betting is carried on in India almost entirely by lotteries, and if you want to back your horse you must buy him, paying the same sum to the lottery that you give to the man who has drawn him. If you win you take the lottery minus second and third prizes if there are any, and the discount, which is placed to the race fund. If you don't *tant pis pour vous.* Having explained this I will go ahead.

For some months before the date fixed for our races every one was as full of importance and secrets as if owning a Derby favourite; and the racecourse was crowded with owners galloping their "crocks," as they delighted to call them, and talking very learnedly about weight-for-age and maiden allowances, subjects which in many cases, a short time before would have been as intelligible to them as the inscription on Cleopatra's Needle. All who had a horse or horses were determined to run them, and every animal was perforce a racehorse for the time being. If they could not aspire to any of the big events there was always the "hack race" to fall back on, and the pony race was also a great field for enterprise.

Some amusing incidents occurred on the course, one I remember, which might have proved serious. I had with T——, our feather weight and leading jockey, just finished off a spin, and we were preparing to give two other "gees" their gallop, when we heard a row behind us, and on looking round saw C——, one of the men from our bungalow, who had come to watch his horses "go," and was riding a chestnut horse, sitting down and sending him along for home as hard as he could, closely followed by the doctor, who was not a brilliant performer, and who was riding rather a vicious stallion. They passed us like a flash of lightning, and it was a toss up which of the two was most frightened. C—— charged a mud wall in desperation and got over all right, which probably saved him, for the stallion came a terrible buster over it, sending the medico flying. This gave the horse a start, but the now riderless stallion was after him again, and C—— had to throw himself off to avoid being decapitated by the stable door, as the horse dashed in, his pursuer close behind. Once inside there was a rare kicking match. Luckily no harm was done before they were separated, and the doctor's animal led off captive to his own stable.

Of course it was, under the circumstances, very difficult to bring off a trial without the result being instantly known all over the station, and although it was under-

stood that stop watches and timing were dishonourable practices (not that I believe they were of the least value in estimating a horse's powers, as the respective weights they were carrying were unknown); still there were offenders against the rule, the principal culprit being L——, a large contractor who kept a stud, and used, if he could not be on the spot himself, to employ some of his men to lay out and watch.

As the time drew near we played him a nice trick which he did not forget in a hurry. We had, amongst others, a thoroughbred sent down to the bungalow to train—a fine, slashing horse, as good over hurdles as he was on the flat. He was engaged in the big race the first day, in which some of Mr. L——'s lot were running, and L—— had for some time been trying to get a line to judge of his chances; but hitherto T—— and myself had managed to baffle him. One morning we determined to run a trial with an unbeaten "waler" (Australian horse), a reputed flyer. Accordingly we sent the two on to the course about 5 A.M. in charge of our stud groom, with orders to "keep his weather eye lifting," as a sailor would say, and if he saw any of the contractor's lot about, to put a red handkerchief over my saddle; if the coast was clear, a white one. Sure enough, when T—— and self arrived on our ponies, the first thing we noticed was the red flag. When we were mounted I told

the stud groom to be handy at a certain turn of the course with a bandage, and directly he saw me pull up to come. Everything ready, off we went. For the first half mile T—— kept the lead, and as we passed a small clump of trees we could distinctly see lying in the ditch Mr. L—— himself, stop watch in hand: a quarter of a mile further on when we were for a moment out of his sight I caught my nag by the head, pulled up as short as possible, and jumped off. Up ran the stud groom, who immediately bandaged the off fore leg tight, at the same time slipping a stone into the foot (a device of his own), and with a beautiful woe-begone expression proceeded to lead our "lame 'un" home. As we expected, by tiffin (lunch) time the whole station had heard that our crack had broken down, and Mr. L—— was triumphant. We kept our own counsel, and having found a piece of springy turf about two miles in the opposite direction, finished his preparation unbeknown to any one.

The evening before the races the assembly rooms were crowded, and the lotteries in full swing. Horses and their owners had come from all parts, and the meeting promised to be a grand success. Mr. L—— was in high feather, and chaffed most unmercifully when T—— bought our broken-down steed for a mere song. I also came in for a share when I entered my horse "Blanc-Mange" for the hack race. He certainly was a most

"unked" looking brute, soap-suddy white, with straight shoulders, narrow chest, and pasterns that looked like wood. He was not expensive, however, costing me but £15. I knew he could fly for half a mile, and if I could only keep him going the odd furlong I thought I had a chance. Moreover, he had a habit of waving his tail round and round, like a Catherine wheel, all the time, which was calculated to disturb the equanimity of anything behind him.

Next day the course presented a lively aspect: crowds of natives in all sorts of coloured raiment, every conceivable kind of vehicle, buggies, dogcarts, ekhas (a native equipage like a small pagoda on wheels, drawn by bullocks or a pony covered with bells), even the ordinary hackerry (bullock waggon) of commercial life, covered for the occasion with red cloth—all were drawn up along the ropes. A contingent of "niggers" in orthodox get up, who if washed would have revealed some of the soldiers of Her Most Gracious Majesty, were also on the spot, not to mention numerous Aunt Sallies and itinerant vendors of sweetstuff in which the native soul delighteth, but which to European eyes seems (I do not know if any one has dared to taste it) first-class abomination. A military band discoursed sweet music in the enclosure, and the grand stand was crowded to overflowing.

Presently the bugle, which played the part of the

saddling bell, rang out for the first race—the big event—and after a suitable interval the numbers went up, amongst them, to everybody's surprise, that of our "lame 'un." T—— was up, and we had had the horse saddled out of the crowd; and as he came striding up the course looking as fit as paint, Mr. L——'s face was a picture. Seeing me he came up very indignantly. "You told me he was lame!" he said; to which I replied "that he must have been mistaken, as I never said a word on the subject." Nine faced the starter, and as the flag fell they all got off beautifully, T——, riding like an angel, lay third till the straight, when, coming through with a rush he landed the crack an easy winner by two lengths.

At this crisis my attention was attracted by a tremendous commotion in the crowd, and I saw two or three fat baboos tumbling about like nine-pins, the cause of it all being our stud-groom, wild with delight, shoving everybody about, and shouting at the top of his voice, "Copped 'em this time, stop watch and all. Out of the way, Bobbagee" (his Hindostanee for cook), and down went another baboo. "Dear, oh dear, well there! old bricks and mortar won't lay hout of a mornin' again. Lor, my master rode like a hangel! Where are yer coming to, fatty," as another sleek Hindoo "turned turtle." Seeing the worthy fellow would get into trouble, I got down as quickly as

possible, and sent him off with a flea in his ear to look after the nags, and get my things ready, as I was riding the next race, in which I was beaten on the post. Nothing further happened till the hack race, in which much amusement was created by the odd figure Blanc Mange cut, with his mane tied up with blue ribbon. L——, as sulky as a bear, was riding one of his own against me, and in a loud tone, as we passed the stand, he offered to bet me I was last, which bet I took and laid him double the amount I beat him.

It was a full race. Thirteen came to the post—all owners up, and some queer turns-out in the way of dress there were, one gentleman, a half-caste, having on a pair of thin merino drawers in default of a better pair of breeches. I was in luck, and drew an inside berth, and directly the flag dropped I let my poor white friend have both spurs, and jumped off with a strong lead, which I managed to maintain by sitting down and riding the whole way, the tail, as I expected, proving a serious stumbling-block to all behind. We had a tremendous tussle at the end, and I just managed to shove Blanc Mange's nose in before Mr. L——'s nag; but had I not punished my *boot* violently, thereby causing my contractor friend to begin to "set to," and make his horse swerve all over the course, I must have been done. I was rather edified by the greetings I got from the military community when passing

the rails. "Mangy wins! Go it, straight legs! Whip the *devil!* Soap-suds wins! Ooray!" It was a real sickener for L——, and as the story leaked out about his stop-watch tactics, he soon afterwards gave up his stud and retired from the Turf.

A FRONTIER MATCH.

It has been said that if twenty-two Englishmen were unfortunate enough to be wrecked on a desert island the first thing they would proceed to do, after satisfying the wants of the inner man, would be to pick sides and play cricket. There is much truth in this assertion, for wherever you go, north, south, east, or west, in every clime, from Arctic snows to tropical heat, you will find the following formula holds good :—Englishmen + stumps, + bat and ball = a cricket match.

I have played cricket in many places and many lands, under advantageous circumstances and the reverse, but perhaps the most extraordinary match I ever assisted at was in the desert, a short distance from Alexandria—I believe the first ever played there. The pitch was prepared by watering the sand and rolling it until it became a hard cake, leaving it to be baked by the sun into a substance somewhat resembling what is called in India "chunam." As may be imagined, it played just a little

"quick," and was rather erratic to boot; in fact, what is known as a bowler's wicket. The scoring was not large on either side, notwithstanding that the ball when hit outside the watered part buried itself deep in the fine sand, and unless carefully "marked down" was lost for some time. Still it was great fun, something new and out of the common, and I remember we finished up afterwards by a race on donkeys to "Bomby's Billar," as the natives call Pompey's Pillar, in which race the donkey was as often on the top of his rider, as the rider on top of the donkey, the softness of the sand preventing any casualty.

But this is nothing to do with a frontier match, so I must get on, and having crossed the desert, enjoyed (?) the Red Sea, travelled over the Bhore Ghaut from Bombay, passed through the vicissitudes of the railway and the "dâk," I find myself at Peshawur. *Apropos* of the "dâk," no one who has not tried it can realize its awful discomfort, especially if the road is bad, the floor of your "gharee" (carriage) at all inclined to be "nubbley," or if you are not provided with sufficient wraps and "rezais" (quilts) to act as fenders and save concussions. The machine has been so often described in books of Indian travel that most people are familiar with it; those who are not, must imagine a cross between a bathing machine and a four-wheeler, with the space between the seats

boarded over. On this you prepare your bed and wedge yourself in as quickly as possible, springs being at a premium. To this box are harnessed two ponies, which generally refuse to start until a fire of straw is lighted underneath their bellies. Once off they gallop all the stage, and the result is (if the wheels keep on) that the inmate of the vehicle spends his time flying about between the roof and the floor, with an occasional visit to either side, consequently at the end of the journey he presents an artistic symphony in blue.

Some years ago an arrangement was made with the Frontier Force to play Peshawur. It was to be a three days' match, and the Frontier Eleven were to be "put up" amongst us. Few grounds in England are better, if as good as the one at Peshawur, though it does not come up to the cricket-field at Calcutta, which is the best in the world, some acres in extent, and as level as a billiard table all over. However, no pains were spared to get a good wicket, and for a week beforehand the energetic secretary might be seen superintending the work of watering, rolling, &c.; and on the day of the match the pitch was perfection.

Our opponents arrived about 11 o'clock and were at once seized upon and billeted. I had under my charge C——, their fast bowler, and my instructions from my captain were to see that he had *enough to drink* at dinner,

which, however, he himself took care should be the case, thereby saving me the trouble. Unfortunately his bowling next day was just as fast and just as straight, though not particularly effective. They won the toss, and elected to go in, commencing with two steady bats, who gave us a deal of trouble before one was run out by a lucky fluke. Then came in a slogger, who proceeded to crack our bowling all over the place, to the delight of the natives who had assembled to witness the game. Not that they understood much about it; but it was a "tomasha" (fête) so they were bound to be present. One gentleman wished he had never come I imagine. He was the magistrate's "moonshee" or clerk, and, like all his countrymen whose lines are cast in pleasant places, extremely "fat and well liking." His vanity was excessive, and the way he prided himself on his English, and thanked his gods he was not one of the common herd who sat on their haunches and eat rice like dogs, delicious. He had been making himself particularly officious and informing every one that "The Sahib struck ball very fine, make much play. Arree dheko" (look there), when a square leg hit caught him in the centre of his—well if he wore such a thing one would have said his waistcoat—and doubling him up completely, rather altered his opinion of "The Sahib striking ball very fine."

It was not till the telegraph showed 112 runs that we

managed to dispose of the swiper, he having made 72 off his own bat. Following him came one of the stoutest individuals I have ever seen, but active as a cat withal. He was evidently the comic man of the side, and rather disconcerted our Bowler B—— by going up to him and shaking hands, as he said, "to show there was no ill-feeling." The first ball he cut for two, and the second he played forward for what would have been one, had not his partner "collided" with him in the middle, thereby sending himself on to his back. To see the way our fat friend turned tail and scudded for his wicket, leaving his pal lying on the ground with all the wind knocked out of him, was simply killing. B—— could hardly put the stumps down for laughing. It was astonishing, too, the amount of refreshment that he managed to consume during his innings. After every other over they had to send out from the pavilion some B. and S., or brandy pawnee. However, he was eventually stumped, and at last the whole were out for 289—a hottish score to go in against.

After the regulation interval, we sent in A——, who was one of the most persistent sticks that could well be imagined. You might bowl what you liked—slows, half-volleys, or at his legs; every ball met the same fate—blocked dead. With him was "associated" our wicket-keeper and hitter, V——, and before they had parted they

had run up 86, of which A—— had contributed seven. To cut matters short, when stumps were drawn for the evening our score stood—242, six wickets, last man 14.

After a welcome tub, we all met at dinner, a meal to which everybody was prepared to do justice. I am sorry to say that the black pool afterwards was not a very brilliant exhibition, and in some cases the chalking of a cue was an almost insurmountable difficulty, notably in the case of the comic man, who, after making a long speech on the angles of incidence and reflection (which he called "anglishidence and flexionsh"), during the delivery of which he kept everybody waiting for the stroke, eventually subsided into oblivion, his head resting on his tumbler.

Next morning we were up betimes to work off the "effects," and at noon we continued our innings, which ended for 298:—9 runs in advance of our adversaries. Their second innings yielded the still larger score of 326, and we were pretty well tired out by the time the last wicket fell. When we commenced next morning the chances looked decidedly against Peshawur. Our first wicket fell for 6 runs, but the Frontier team had been so well "nursed" that their fielding was very mild, and when the telegraph showed eight wickets for 300, leaving two wickets to go down and 18 runs to make, the excitement was tremendous. Even the damaged magis-

trate's clerk began to assert himself again, and the cheers of the whole garrison, who had turned out *en masse*, spurred us on to victory. Our ninth wicket was bowled neck and heels at 314, and with fear and trembling our forlorn hope, W——, walked out to receive the last ball of the over. The roar that went up when he cracked it well over the bowler's head for 4, and thereby won the game, might have been heard at Cabul.

Thus ended one of the best matches I ever played, in which no less than 1,231 runs were made, and as we assembled to speed our parting guests with three hearty cheers, all felt sorry that the match was over, and that we were losing such a lot of real good fellows.

BEAR SHOOTING IN THE HIMALAYAS.

Some years ago I found myself one of a party of three standing outside the Lake Hotel at Nynee Tal, watching the preparations for a start on a two months' shooting expedition under the snows. My two companions were of exactly opposite natures, the elder, Alfred Norcott, was an experienced shekaree (sportsman) but terribly lazy, and one of the most indefatigable smokers I ever saw: morning, noon and night he had a short black pipe in his teeth, and on more than one occasion had barely escaped being burnt, his bed having caught fire when he fell asleep, and his pipe dropped out of his mouth. The younger of the two had no great experience of woodcraft, but made up for it by his extreme energy and keenness. Always wanting to be up and doing, he made our lives a burden for the few days we were preparing. At six o'clock in the morning, Harry Furness (for that was his name) used to burst into our rooms with, "Hi, Hi, Hi, time to get up

and bathe, come, out you go, show a leg, we've heaps to do."

Norcott slept next to me, and when I heard through the thin wall his supplication, "For mercy sake, Quicksilver," which was the nickname we gave Harry, "*do* go and bathe without knocking a fellow up; you are getting a perfect pest," I knew my turn was coming; and in another minute Harry was "interviewing" me. It was no use trying to get rid of him. If you put him off and said that you'd be "out in a moment," he would pace up and down the passage, bursting in every second to see how you were getting on. Even Norcott could never stand the siege long, and had to turn out with a growl, filling the place at the same time with smoke. However, we were all sworn friends, and I do not think the whole time we were out that we had a single quarrel, which is something to be able to say, as every one who knows anything about a shooting party will confirm.

On the morning in question, Norcott and Harry had been up to the bank to get some rupees, while I had undertaken to see things off. The advanced party, under the charge of my bearer, consisted of coolies carrying the tent, stores, and luggage. Our two shekarees (hunters), Norcott's bearer John (a Madrassee), my syce with "The Market Gardener," a small chestnut "tattoo" which I determined to take with us as far as I could, and last, but in his own

estimation by no means least, "Nip," Harry's English terrier, a most amusing dog of the almost extinct tinker's breed, a faithful and true companion, and brave as a lion. I found him of the utmost use in urging the coolies on their wild career. "Fetch him up, good dog," was all that was necessary, and in a few moments the loiterer appeared, with Nip barking at his heels. Everything went ahead satisfactorily amidst the usual amount of vituperation and jabber; and after quaffing the parting cup, we shouldered our guns, giving our rifles to the two shekarees and John to carry, and set out to walk our first stage—thirteen miles.

It is needless to recount the various adventures *en route* to the snows; how the tent once came down in the middle of the night and nearly smothered us all, or how I inadvertently took my seat for breakfast on the top of an ant-hill, with a result more amusing to others than myself. Suffice it that we arrived safe and sound at N——, just under the snows, one fine evening about 6 P.M., after a tiring climb of some six hours' duration. By this time we were all pretty well up to the dodges of camping, and everything was under weigh for dinner in a very short space. Our tent was pitched under a projecting rock, further protected by a pentroof of boughs, which we cut and built over it. I had just completed cooking our dinner with the aid of John, and had left him to

dish up, in order that I might help Harry to arrange the table, a process that consisted of spreading a towel or table-cloth on the ground and ranging some cases round to serve as chairs, when I heard a most extraordinary noise, and on coming up to the tent, found Norcott on his back with our sole case of brandy rolling down the "kud" (precipice). He had arranged himself, as he thought, a comfortable seat, by propping the case against a tree, which tree overhung "the kud," and went into the tent for a moment to fill his everlasting pipe. Nip seeing the case, either thought it was meant for him to guard, or considered it more comfortable than the bare ground, so promptly curled himself thereon. And Norcott when he reappeared, as promptly seated himself on the top of the dog, who resented the insult by an *argumentum ad dentes*. Hence the disappearance of the brandy and the volley of abuse. At this moment Harry rushed out, and without saying a word, dashed down the hill after the brandy.

"Well, you have done it," said I. "Done it be hanged," replied Norcott, "that infernal dog has made three parts of his supper off my leg. Give us a hand up." After helping him to a perpendicular position, I shouted to Harry to know what damage was done, and from the bottom of the valley came his reply, "one bottle saved the rest all smashed." "No grog for you, Mr. Norcott," said I; "we shall have to send back for some more. It

will never do to go on without any. This will keep us here a week." "Don't care," growled Norcott. "Shouldn't bring that beastly dog. If you are going to send back, get me some more 'baccy." It was no good crying over spilt milk, so we had to make the best of a bad job, and go to bed after dinner without our accustomed "tot."

Next morning at 5 A.M., we made a start in quest of bear. That is to say, Harry and I went, Norcott preferring to stay in bed. After about a mile and a half's walking, partly on my feet, partly on my hands, and the remaining distance on my eyelids, I reached a small plateau of grass, and was just going to address my "shekaree," when he grasped me by the arm, and pointed vehemently over our heads. Looking up I saw a female bear with two cubs, feeding placidly, quite ignorant of our proximity. Now I had been repeatedly cautioned never to shoot at a bear above me, but in the excitement I quite forgot the warning, and adjusting my sight to 150 yards, fired. I was somewhat unsteady from my walk, and consequently, although I hit her, my bullet took effect too far back. On being hit she rose up on her hind-legs, and caught one of her cubs a swinging box on the ear, which rolled it down the side of the hill like a ball, killing it instantly. She then caught sight of me, and in another moment charged straight down on us. To fire the other barrel was the work of a second, but to my consternation, the shell with

which it was loaded burst about a foot over her back. Luckily my shekaree stood firm and handed me my second gun; with the first barrel I again missed her, but the second ball caught her straight between the eyes, and crashing into her brain, killed her dead about 10 yards off.

I confess I was terribly excited, and as soon as the danger was over felt very queer. Poor Lal Sing, my shekaree, was a sort of pea-green colour and trembling all over. However, he stuck to me like a man and probably saved my life, for if he had not handed me my second gun, the brute must have been on top of me and we should have both gone down the "kud." As soon as I had pulled myself together a bit, we marked the spot where the she bear lay, and then proceeded to try and catch the cub, who was running about endeavouring to find its mother. After a tremendous lot of trouble we managed to secure the little beggar, who bit and swore like a trooper, and tying its legs together swung it over a stick, and so brought it back to camp with us. It soon made friends with Nip, and was for a long time afterwards the pet of Harry's regiment, until it got so big and cheeky that it was voted dangerous. The mother's skin I still have, and when I look at it I often think I had a narrow squeak for my life in getting it. When I got back to camp I found Norcott making breakfast; he had

shot a jungle cock, and was in the thick of plucking it. Shortly afterwards Harry arrived with an empty bag, having missed a "ghorral" (sort of antelope) badly, he informed us. He was immensely pleased with the cub, which, being his birthday, I gave him.

The remainder of the day we devoted to cleaning up, writing, and taking stock. To my surprise, I found our provisions were running very short, so much so, that we held a council of war, and decided to send another coolie back to replenish. It was all right so long as we could shoot meat, but if it came on wet, or we failed to "hold straight," it might be just a trifle nasty.

A few days afterwards we all three went out together, to see if we could do anything, and some terrible bad ground we had to go over. Norcott lost his nerve, and in one place which we had to swing across by a bush, with a sheer drop of 1,000 feet below, we were forced to tie him with a rope for fear of his letting go his hold. As Harry said, "It's all that poisonous 'baccy he smokes that makes him so bad." Presently, as we were going over the crest of a hill, in grass up to our waists, up jumped a thing that looked to me like a donkey, but which Norcott called a "seraow deer;" however, two barrels from each of us had no more effect than if we had whistled. I ran forward to get another crack at it, but, deceived by the long grass, got over the brow, and in

another moment I was flying down the side of the hill after the fashion of a toboggin, with the exception that I had no board between myself and mother earth whereupon I might sit. Halfway down I was brought up by a friendly bush, and the only damage I suffered besides a few bruises, was the loss of the seat of my trousers, a deficiency I was forced to supply by sewing in a white towel, which though it answered the purpose, did not enhance the beauty of the suit, and earned for me the nickname of "the perambulating target."

Needless to say we did not bag the "seraow," and returned home without any venison. We were gradually being reduced to the Irishman's dinner of "herring and point," for our stores had dwindled down to one box of red herrings, two tins of "Moir's" soups, some rice, sugar, and tea, and to make matters worse, it threatened for rain. Still we kept our spirits up, for Harry said "he was bound to shoot something soon," and Norcott did not care so long as the tobacco held out; besides Nip could be utilised as a *dernier ressort*, I suggested, though the proposal was scouted unanimously.

The following day we witnessed a most extraordinary incident. While we were sitting at tiffin (such as it was) all the servants came running in pointing to the cliff above and shouting, "Bharloo, bharloo, Sahib" (bear, bear, sir). Looking up, sure enough we espied three,

two males and one female; the two males were fighting like Kilkenny cats, and in the middle of a "round" they got too near to the edge and both came head over heels into the jungle below, about 100 yards off us. Snatching up our rifles we rushed in where they fell, and found one lying stone dead, while the other, with a broken forearm, was tearing everything that was near him to pieces. A ball from Harry's rifle finished him, just as Nip, who had followed us, pinned Mr. Bruin by the nose; thus in ten minutes we had bagged two fine bears and witnessed an episode that might occur only once in a life-time, if that.

I cannot say that the bears' paws or hams were much of a dish, but as our stores did not come in for another five days, and the rain came down in torrents half the time, they kept us going. Of course, the day the coolies arrived, and it was not of such vital importance, we each shot something, which gave us almost more venison than we knew what to do with. However, we had a tremendous blow out, and after dinner drank the health of ourselves and absent friends in the new case of brandy. The next day we pushed on and left our "bear ground" for a future occasion—one that I am sorry to say, as far as I am concerned, has never turned up.

A DAY AMONG THE SNIPE.

THERE are many worse things in life than a good day's snipe shooting, no matter in what part of the world the said jubilee may be held. Personally, I have shot snipe and shot *at* snipe in more than one quarter of the globe, and I confess that wherever it was, either under a tropical sun, where the birds have certainly not half so much twist on, or tramping through a half-frozen bog, I have always enjoyed the sport in the superlative degree. Some of the best bags, and the best fun, I found in India, not a hundred miles from what is known as the "City of Palaces," to wit,—Calcutta.

There, in the year of grace, 186— I found myself, like a young bear, with all my troubles before me, and at the same time emulating the lily of the field, and "taking no thought for the morrow." It was the custom in those days for every one to keep an official score of his bag, and when you went out for your evening ride on the "Mall"

you were sure to hear that M—— had been out and killed sixty couple, or that A—— and T—— had got ninety-eight couple between them. But to the question, "Where did they find the ground?" no answer was ever forthcoming. Indeed, if you happened to be in high favour with any of the resident sportsmen, and by dint of great persuasion managed to get them to consent to take you out for a day, you were always sworn to secrecy, never to divulge on pain of death the locality you visited. This being the case, the large bags were made only by a select few, who guarded their preserves with a jealousy equal to that of a *nouveau riche* who has but lately taken to rearing pheasants. True, they had in most instances paid large sums of money to various "shekarees" to acquire their knowledge, and it was hardly to be expected that they were going to "stand treat" to every migrating captain or subaltern who paused in his flight for awhile among them.

Perhaps this secrecy somewhat tended to "whet our purpose," which, so far as C—— and I were concerned, was anything but "almost blunted," and accordingly we laid ourselves out to circumvent the astute residents in every conceivable way; but with little success. Champagne loosed not their lips, neither did dinners *ad lib.* cause their tongues to wag, and after having been sent all round the country to "First-rate ground, old fellow only,

don't let out I told you," only to find that however excellent the ground might be for purposes of agriculture or sepulture it was anything but "first-rate" from a snipe's point of view, we began to despair of success. One morning, however, C—— came into my room, when I was disputing with my body servant the amount of money he could do me out of per month without the "worm turning," and exclaimed,

"Old boy, I have rare news; I have found out some A1 snipe ground. Send that beggar of yours off and I'll tell you all about it." Slightly incredulous, I dismissed my sable attendant, who was not sorry to get away, and prepared to listen to C——'s story.

"Well," said he, "I was down at the racecourse this morning, and I heard Thompson and McIver talking about shooting next Saturday. Of course I pricked my ears, and presently Thompson said, 'Look here, I must be at Garden Reach in the morning; I could join you from there.' 'Why, it's all on the way,' replied McIver. 'Take a boat from there and land at the third ghaut (landing place) down the river on the opposite side. You will see the gheel (pond) just the other side of the trees. If you are there first wait for me, and I'll do the same if I arrive before you.' That was enough for me, so I galloped up to Garden Reach, took a boat, landed at the third ghaut, inspected the ground, and it is alive with

snipe. There, what do you think of that? Won't they be savage when they find we've discovered the preserve? they will each suspect the other of letting the cat out of the bag, for neither of them saw me."

"By Jove," I said, "this *is* luck. Let's see: to-day's Thursday; we must get leave to-morrow, and be off early. I'll tell my bearer to see to the provender, and we will take your boy and my bhestie (water-carrier), to carry the stuff."

Next morning we started at an early hour, and arrived without mishap at the third ghaut. We took one of the natives of the place with us as a guide, and commenced to shoot at the end of the gheel nearest the river. It was, as C—— had described it, "alive with snipe." They got up in wisps like a flock of starlings, and we were blazing away as fast as we could load. As we got more into the middle of the gheel the water deepened, and was a good bit above one's knees, which made the walking very heavy work. The snipe now were only here and there, in patches of paddy (rice) that showed above the water; consequently it was a case of a single shot, or at most a right and left, which I vastly preferred to firing at a bird among a mass of twirling companions. However, our native guide said we could not go much further without a boat, and that we ought to take the outsides first; accordingly we made the best of our way towards a village

that lay on our right. All of a sudden, while I was stumbling over the rice and splashing through the water, I put my foot on something soft, that slid away from under it, and looking down I saw an enormous snake twisting itself from under my boot.

I do not think I ever was so frightened in my life. C—— said I shouted as if the Old Gentleman himself had got hold of me. However, he came running up, and soon settled the brute's hash with a charge of shot. The niggers said it was harmless, and only a water-snake, but it gave me such a turn that I could not go on shooting for some time, so we adjourned to lunch, and, notwithstanding C——'s chaff, I was obliged to dilute my cold tea with a "dhrop of the crayter." After we had finished (what would be termed by the gentlemen who describe such feasts for the modest sum of one penny per line) "our cold collation," we proceeded to beat up towards the village. We had not got very far on our journey when C—— brought down a snipe with his second barrel at an amazing distance. I had just called out, "Good shot, old man!" when, to our intense surprise, an agile native burst from under a palm tree, and, tucking up his very scanty clothing, picked up the snipe and bolted as hard as he could go for the home of his fathers. C—— recovered his presence of mind before I did, and ramming a brace of cartridges into his gun, fired both barrels at the re-

treating marauder, who was now about eighty-five or ninety yards off. No sooner had he fired than our friend dropped all of a heap, and at the same instant a howl arose from the village that bid fair to wake the dead. "Golee Kia!" shouted my bhestie, which, being interpreted, meant, he has eaten the bullet, or he has been shot.

"Frightened, you mean," said I; "no shot could hurt him at that distance. Besides, what is all the shindy in the village?"

My inquiry was answered by a white-haired old scoundrel, who, with a host of followers, came up "salaaming," and said, "Gureeb perwar" (protector of the poor), "my son has eaten the sahib's bullet, and my son's wife will also die, as she has unfortunately partaken of the same indigestible meal."

"Nonsense," I replied, "we will go and see." This the old gentleman did not like, for he said, "We must not go to the village, or their jat (caste) would be broken, but if we made him a present (backsheesh) of 100 rupees, 'he would say no more about it;'" otherwise he should take us to the "kutwal" (police station). C—— was for making it warm for him then and there but I begged him to be quiet, and insisted on inspecting the damage done. When we arrived at the first victim (the would-be thief), we found him lying on his face groaning, and oddly

enough the nearer we got the worse he became. However, a vigorous application of shoe leather brought him to life again with a celerity that quite eclipsed Parr's Life Pills or Holloway's Ointment; and on carefully examining him all over, we found two pellets had struck him in the leg, just drawing blood. We made him march by the side of the ancient one, between us, till we came to the village, where we vowed that unless they produced his wife, who was supposed to be at death's door from *lead* poisoning, we would commit unheard-of atrocities.

After waiting some time, the people informed us that the lady was better, and had been so frightened at seeing the "sahibs" coming that she had taken up her bed and walked, but where to they were unable to say. Thereupon I gave the white-headed veteran (the younger sinner had bolted), a moral lecture on the enormity of the crime he had committed in attempting to practise on two such great men as C—— and myself, and presenting him with two rupees to show that the "sahibs" were as generous as they were great, we left to continue our sport. I am fain to confess that the aged Hindoo seemed much more impressed by the two rupees than by the lecture. Probably he did not understand more than a third of what I said, so there was some excuse for him; but the gift of money was a language that he had mastered most thoroughly.

We met with no more adventures that day, excepting

that we both fell into a deep hole, trying to circumvent some teal, thereby getting wet through, and by five o'clock we found ourselves at the riverside, where the boat was waiting for us. On counting the bag, we found a total of fifty-three and a half couple of snipe, one teal, a paddy bird, a blue jay, and last, but not least, one water-snake. Not so bad, considering our biggest shoot before had averaged somewhere about eleven or twelve couple.

Next morning it was all over the town that we had "struck ile" as the Yankees say, and great was the jealousy displayed, that two non-residents should have found a happy hunting-ground. But the cream of the fun was to come when Thompson and McIver returned from their expedition to the third ghaut on the Saturday. They had managed to shoot sixteen couple only, and were highly gratified by finding the remains of our lunch and a large number of empty cartridge cases adorning the ground of what they fondly thought was *their* preserve. Foolishly they made their grievance public, and consequently got most unmercifully chaffed, for of course we told how we had, to use a sailor's expression "foregathered" on them. However, they were wise enough to keep the locality a secret, and entering into an offensive and defensive treaty with C—— and self likewise to keep it dark, we were enabled to have many a good day. Sometimes all four of us went out together. But never on any of

our incursions did we make so good a bag as on the day on which the wily Hindoo tried to rush me for a hundred rupees.

So well did we keep our own counsel that when I left Calcutta I do not believe the secret of where the preserve was situated had leaked out. However, that is some few years ago, and by this time I suppose it is public property, or perhaps, *tempora mutantur*, the "Tenuirostres" no longer frequent the gheel. However, it is worth a trial, so to any one bound for the City of Palaces, I give the following advice :—"Take a boat and go to the third ghaut below Garden Reach," and I hope they may have as good "a day among the snipe," as we did when we got six to four the best of the resident sportsmen.

A CENTRAL AMERICAN COCK-PIT.

Personally I could never see any sport in cock fighting, though our grandfathers and their fathers before them looked upon it as a highly diverting pastime, and to see a good main of cocks would go any distance, and put themselves, without a murmur, to any amount of inconvenience.

The only two fights at which I have been present were one in England, or rather Ireland, and the other in the city of Guatemala, in Central America. The first of the two occasions was an impromptu affair, got up by an officer in a cavalry regiment, which ended without blood being spilt. The *denouement* was rather amusing, so I will give the story.

The arrangements had been made to bring the fight off in M——'s quarters, and for the purpose he had had his carpet taken up in the inner room and extemporized a pit. Invitations had been issued to a select few, and at 2 p.m.

we were all assembled, and the fun (?) commenced. There were four fighting cocks, and M—— himself handled one, while a fur-capped individual, known as "Larry," presided over the destinies of the antagonists. Larry was a character in his way, he was a little bit of everything, partly bird fancier and dog dealer, partly rat catcher, and wholly poacher, a capital judge of a horse, and possessed the greatest capacity for swallowing raw whisky that I ever saw. The standing joke was to put a tea-spoonful of cayenne pepper into a wine glass of "the craytur," and after stirring it well up, to give it to Larry to drink, which he did without winking his eye, merely exclaiming, "Begorrah, but it's foine stuff to lay hould of yer." The number of glasses so doctored that he managed to put away in the course of the day one would think must have made him ill, but they had no visible effect; so presumably he had a different lining to that given to ordinary mortals. Such was the gentleman who had kindly consented to be assistant master of the ceremonies. Outside the door was posted the last joined cornet, to see that the coast was clear, and that neither the colonel nor major might unexpectedly "drop in" on the proceedings.

All being in readiness the fight commenced, and after a prodigious amount of hustling and expletives Larry placed his bird on the ground, and, executing a war-dance,

bade it "set to for the honour of Ould Ireland." In the midst of the fluttering and flapping the cornet sentry rushed in, whispering, "*Cave*, here's the Colonel coming." For M—— to seize one cock and Larry the other was the work of an instant, and both were deposited in the inner room under the bed, with Larry to keep them safe, while we all dashed out into the outer room, slammed the door, and disposed ourselves in various positions, endeavouring to look as innocent as we could under the circumstances, an effort that in some instances was a palpable failure.

Just as we were all comfortably seated there came a knock at the door, and on M—— shouting "Come in," the Colonel appeared. Looking round the room, he said, "Ah, M——, got quite a levee I see; I came to ask you if you would like to drive over with me to the pigeon match this afternoon." "Thanks, Colonel, I'll come," replied M——. "What time do you start?" "In about an hour I shall be ready, and will call for you," continued the Colonel, "and——" At this moment, to our consternation, from the depths of the inner chamber came a most unmistakable "Cock-a-doodle-do!" followed by a burst of eloquence from Larry, and from the further sounds which followed, it was evident that he was chasing the refractory animal. "Cluck, cluck, tuck, caw." "Arrah, bad luck to ye, ye spalpeen—be gorrah, that's near ye!" "Chuck, tuck, tuck, ta-w!"—bang came a

boot against the door. "Bad scran to ye for the loikes of an illigant bird to behave as ye'r doin'. Arrah, be the powers, I've got ye." And the suppressed notes of the cock showed that he was a prisoner, and, moreover, in close confinement.

With a twinkle in his eye, the Colonel said to the crest-fallen M——, "I did not know you kept poultry, M——, but I can't allow them in the quarters, you know, they make such a mess. You must keep them outside. I think you might have sent me an egg anyhow." And, with a parting injunction to be ready in an hour, he retired. Such a roar of laughter as greeted his exit I never heard, and it was only augmented when Larry, now penitent and humble, put his head in, and began to explain how it was that the fowl had got abroad. "Bedad, yer honour, it's meself that's moighty sorry that that ill-behaved bird should have disgraced himself, but if you were to give me all the whisky in Ireland it'd bate me to tell yer how the blackguard got out. Eh, but phwat did the Colonel say? However, they're all straight now, yer honour, I've laid 'em in the bed and pulled the sheets on 'em." "What?" said M——, "You've put the birds inside my bed? You scoundrel, take 'em out again at once." "And for why not?" replied the incorrigible Larry, "sure the Colonel moight be after looking for them hisself, and it wasn't Larry Doolan that was going to be

cotched. But if yer honour's a mind I'll take 'em out, though they look illigant in the bed." Of course the birds were got out of barracks as quickly as possible, and Larry duly comforted with a reward and plenty of whisky. The party broke up, and most of us met at the pigeon match, where M—— informed us that the Colonel had been giving him a talking to on the way over, on the impropriety of cock-fighting in barracks.

It was some years after the foregoing event that I found myself assisting at another *séance*, and this time it was the regular business, carried out without fear of interruption, and with all the disgusting details attached to the sport (?). It was on a fine morning in January that my friend F—— and myself received at the hotel in Guatemala, Central America, where we were staying, a polite invitation from the ex-President of the Republic, to come and witness his cocks fight a main with those of a champion cock-fighter who also resided in the city. Accordingly after breakfast we ordered our mules, and set off in quest of the *rendezvous*. After riding over a mile or so of villanously-paved streets, reminding one forcibly of Mexico, we at last reached the pit, a high circular house, something like a small circus, coated with whitewash, and surrounded by verandahs hung with grass mats to keep the sun off. Outside the edifice were long lines of low sheds, in which were penned numerous game cocks of all

sorts and sizes, and round the doorway were congregated a crowd of ruffians of the lowest type—a company that on the spur of the moment induced one's right hand to feel if the "six-shooters" were at home in our revolver pockets. Giving up our mules to our "arriero" to look after, we pushed through, and, presenting our cards, were duly ushered into the reserved seats set apart for us. True they were nothing more than an ordinary plank on which to sit, but we had the advantage of being railed off from the common herd, and were next to the referee, who occupied a sort of box, somewhat resembling the judge's box at a race-meeting.

When we had disposed ourselves as comfortably as, under the circumstances, we were able, we had time to look round, as the champions had not yet arrived. It was a curious sight; the galleries or tiers were crammed, their occupants being wedged in like sardines in a box, without distinction of rank or race. Guatemalteco nobles of ancient Spanish descent had for their neighbours half-dressed Indians and cut-throats of the lowest origin. A few women, dotted about here and there, and soldiers in uniform completed the picture. A deal of betting was being carried on, principally by signs. The man who wanted to back Signor Don Thomas's bird would shout out "So many 'pesos' (dollars) Don Thomas!" and wait for some one to take it up. If the bet was too high or

too low, the would-be taker, holding up his hands, signified by the number of fingers he extended the amount he was willing to wager, and the bet was booked by a corresponding signal. All money was paid on the nail, which, under the circumstances, was a wise regulation.

Presently we became aware, by the cessation of the row, that someone of note had arrived, and in a few moments our courteous host, greeted by a cheer, took his place by our side, and the signal was given for the birds to be brought in. The first thing that surprised me was a packet of what looked like surgical knife blades, about five inches long and as sharp as razors. These were laid on the shelf in front of the referee, who proceeded to measure them carefully. On enquiring what they were for, I was informed that they were "the spurs" which were strapped on the contending birds, one blow being, as a rule, sufficient to cause instant death. I am not sure that this system is not less cruel than the ordinary method, though it certainly made it more a matter of chance, for often a defeated bird, in trying to get away from its victor, accidentally gave the *coup de grace*, and if it could stand up and walk round was proclaimed the winner, usually amidst a storm of hisses.

However, to continue. After a "dummy set to" of no seeming interest to the assembled throng, the big event

came on, and the rivals were brought in, carefully handled, with a cloth thrown over them. Duly armed with the formidable knives, they were set and the fight commenced. From this moment our host was completely transformed, with eyes nearly starting out of his head, he kept working his left hand telegraphing bets, while with his right he jotted down on paper the amounts, addressing his *gallina* from time to time in the language of the poets. To speak to him was a work of supererogation, his whole attention was so rivetted on the fight, and his "book," that he was deaf to all outside sounds. In a couple of minutes the adversary's bird lay gasping on the ground, stabbed to the heart, and plaudits long and loud greeted his success. The only word he uttered was "bueno," and proceeded diligently to cast up his accounts, which came to somewhere about two thousand dollars.

At this moment there was a "difference of opinion" among the gods, and we were told that we had best get out as quickly as possible as there was every chance of a free fight. Changing our revolvers from our pockets behind, into our breasts, we charged the door, and swinging a sentry who tried to stop us out of the way, dashed down the narrow flight of stairs, F—— missing his footing, tumbled against me, and down we both rolled to the bottom, the indignant sentry coming after to assert his

authority. However, before he reached us we had picked ourselves up, and finding our mules where we left them, we rode off, glad enough to find ourselves in the open air, and away from the scene of cruelty.

We dined that night with the ex-President, who told us that he had won about six hundred pounds altogether, having, after landing close upon fifteen hundred, lost more than half on one fight. He also informed us that the reason of the row was that some caballeros refused to pay up, and, as strangers were not popular among the "scum," he had told us to go away in case of a fight. He was not far wrong, as it appeared, for there was a pretty little scrimmage in which the "welsher" got two knives into his ribs, and three others were badly wounded.

Such is a brief description of my second and, I trust, my last appearance in a cock-pit, for nothing will convince me that it is not a most depraving and cruel thing, and only a medium for the heaviest gambling. The prices which a good game cock will realize in Guatemala are fabulous, and no present you could devise, however costly, would be so appreciated as a couple of good English birds, though, with the way they arm them, I cannot see that a good cock has any advantage over the tamest of farm-yard chanticleers. Still the good people of Central America seem to think differently, and as they are content to lose

the earnings of a lifetime on one bird, in two or three minutes, they presumedly ought to know something about it. So long as I am not asked again to witness this form of recreation I am singularly indifferent as to the respective merits of the various fighting cocks.

HOW WE WON THE CUP IN CENTRAL AMERICA.

You may well say that racing is an institution. Wherever one goes one is almost sure to find a course, and a grand stand of some sort or kind. It is pretty nearly certain, no matter whether the climate is hot or cold, tropical or given to occasional icebergs, that, so long as there are two or three Englishmen gathered together, there will, ere many weeks have elapsed, be a race-meeting. I have seen in many lands many a really good set-to, and though, doubtless, the nags competing would have cut but a sorry figure at even the smallest of our suburban meetings, yet they were great fun, and I always enjoyed them immensely.

Perhaps the funniest meeting I ever attended was at a small British possession, situated in Central America. It was not a particularly inviting spot, almost on a level with the sea, and built on what is called a mangoe swamp.

The course was, to say the least of it, peculiar: on starting, about half a mile of sandy road had to be covered before one came round a sharp turn on to what did duty for grass. Certainly, as one came into the straight the going was better and less sandy, for the actual finish took place on what was called the cricket ground. The edifice that was improvised for a grand stand was nothing more nor less than an ordinary dwelling-house, American-built, like all the rest, of pitch-pine, with a verandah running around it. Under the verandah was erected staging, and at the bottom, on the ground, were placed a row of chairs. The judge's box was an antiquated and condemned sentry box, which was kindly supplied by the military authorities gratis, while the course itself was marked by bamboo poles, with "chatties," a species of earthenware pots, stuck in an inverted position on the top of them. On the right hand coming down to "the stand" were a long line of barracks, while on the left, and washing almost on to the course, was the blue water of the Caribbean Sea.

Having thus briefly described the materials, I will endeavour to give a description of the races themselves. When I arrived in the place, it was about a fortnight before they were to be held, and the chief topic was, naturally, the forthcoming events. Nearly every individual had a horse, or rather pony going, from the officer commanding the portion of the West Indian

Regiment quartered there, to his serjeant-major, and from the wealthy merchant, who owned tracts of mahogany land as large as a whole county, down to the half-breed Spaniard, who sold "aguadiente" (a native spirit) in a small hovel. Every clerk in the various "dry goods stores" had a crock, and there was as much mystery and as many straight tips were flying about as if it were the eve of an event like the Two Thousand or Derby. As I was a new comer, and hospitality being a rule in those parts, I was of course put up to many "real certainties." Indeed, I do not think I ever had a cocktail with any of the numerous sportsmen without getting at least two straight tips, if not more. The house wherein I was lodged overlooked a sandy road, and mind you, in those countries a sandy road *is* a sandy one, up over the fetlocks, and sometimes nearly to the knees in fine dust, that when a pony gallops over gives one the idea that an 81-ton gun has been fired off, or that about an acre and a half of country has been blown up by gunpowder, and the smoke is still hanging about.

Well, this road I found was the recognized training ground, and every evening I used to see things of ponies, with their owners up, black, white, grey, and all sorts of colours (not only the ponies, I mean, but their owners) pass up the road for their gallops. True, there was a certain amount of advantage in the dust, for no tout,

"Aristocratic" or otherwise, could possibly have made out what horse was where, or which man was who. All he could see was a frantic figure, seated on something, whooping and halloaing like a maniac, and enveloped in an impenetrable cloud. Somehow or another it leaked out that I had ridden races in the mother country, and I was besieged by importunate owners with requests that I would endeavour to pilot their steeds to victory. I had the same answer for all, viz., I had not got my kit with me, and was out of condition, otherwise I should have only been too glad.

In the midst of all this race fever, my friend A——, who had come out travelling with me, came to the verandah, where I was lying in a hammock, and said, "Look here, it strikes me that these fellows do not know anything about racing or riding. Let's buy a nag and have a cut in." "Right," I replied, "but where are we to find the animal? Everything that has four, or even three legs, is engaged weeks ago; besides, we have only got some eight days to train in, and these Creoles and store-keepers have been going it like smoke for close upon a month." "Well," continued A——, "I heard to-day of a nag that has just carried the overseer of Signor T——'s estates round the lot of them, and as he has been three weeks on the road, and constantly ridden, he must be pretty hard. He has left him about five miles

out, and as he can't stay for the races will take 100 dollars down. So I got the offer, and am to give him an answer to-night." "Buy it by all means," said I, "we will have some fun if we don't win anything." So off went A——, and in a short time came back to tell me the bargain was concluded. He and I were to go up with the overseer to the Rancho, about five miles off, next morning, and if we liked the nag we could pay the money and take it right away.

Accordingly next morning we went, and I found a wiry looking little grey in hard condition, and seemingly with a turn of speed, which we thought we could develop in the week left us. By noon the grey was safely lodged in the stables of my house, and that evening we took him out for his first spin. Naturally we did not select the dusty road, but went off in completely an opposite direction, where we had things all to ourselves. The big race was for the Cup, twenty dollars entrance, p.p., and for that event and the Merchants' Purse, we entered our grey, which we called Shooting Star; much to the surprise of the residents, who chaffed us considerably, one tall Yankee wanting to back himself to roll a barrel of sugar against our crock, and "show him a star that would pretty well make him look round before he shot, yew bet." However, we persevered, and by the first day of the races Shooting Star

was as fit as any of the ponies engaged. The first race was "The Residents' Plate, for all horses owned by residents in the town, catch weights, owners up, one mile." There were fifteen entries, and the figures the owners cut going up to the post nearly killed me with laughing; the colours were lovely, and would have puzzled Mr. Weatherby considerably. White, black belt, was represented by a coffee-coloured gentleman, who had on a white shirt, with a black necktie tied across it, a white handerchief on his head, no boots, but a pair of black-silk stockings, and on his feet were stuck a pair of dancing-pumps. The rest of the performers were dressed much in the same fashion. I had the riding of Shooting Star, and cannot say that my turn-out was much to boast of, as I had no topboots with me, and we had had some colours knocked up by a native tailor, who had never seen such things before. However, when I saw the costumes in the first race my spirits somewhat revived.

After the horses had gone to the post, which was round the turn out of sight, we had to wait a tremendous time before anything appeared, but at last they did come all over the country, on the course and off it, some in the saddle, some on the necks of their steeds, and all flogging with a vengeance; eventually amid great cheering, the race was won by a young Scotchman,

a clerk in one of the "stores," who looked as proud of his performance as a man could well be, though it was long odds that he came in before his pony. Presently the time for the Cup arrived, and I went, and after weighing (for as this was not catch-weights there was a tremendous ceremony enacted by the clerk of the scales), I mounted Shooting Star and cantered down to the post.

The distance was one mile five furlongs, and, as I have before said, the start was on the sandy road. There was a tremendous field, and they had to be despatched in two ranks; much time was lost by reason that two of the horses deposited themselves and their riders in the ditch at the side of the road, but at last they were got together again and all was ready. I was unfortunately in the second rank, and stood a very fair chance of getting my brains kicked out; however, I kept well back, and kept my eyes on the man who was to fire the pistol, for that was the way in which the signal to "go" was given. As I saw the flash I gave Shooting Star his head, and before the front rank had pulled themselves together I had poached two lengths, and was clear of the dust. The only horse I feared was a little bay ridden by a coffee-planter who knew quite as much about it as I did myself. He and I lay close together and led the field till we came into the turn out of the road. Here a diversion took place, for out of the mass shot a frantic Creole punishing

his pony like mad, and shouting like a demon. Cannoning against my coffee-planter, he sent him flying off the course and took the lead. As I expected, he soon came back to me, and I never shall forget his rage at seeing me come up on his whip hand, holding hard, and slip past him, as if he were standing still. If all his curses had fallen on my head, I should certainly not now be on this earth. Needless to say, I won the Cup easy, the coffee-planter ran second, and the rest came in in a ruck, a good many of the animals minus their jockeys who had tumbled off *en route*. The populace were so angry at being beaten by the strangers that we decided to scratch our nag for the Purse, and contented ourselves with winning the Cup, and watching the rest of the fun from the stand. Three days afterwards we left the place and disposed of Shooting Star for double what we gave, besides a fair share of dollars which we netted over the race. I fancy the next time the innocent stranger attends their meeting, and enters a horse, the residents will look a little sharper than they did after us and our racer, Shooting Star.

JOTTINGS OF A SHOOTING TRIP.

"CAST off starn warp!" "All clear, sir!" and the tender steamed back to Southampton Docks with its freight of human beings, the majority of whom were of the gentler sex, and therefore in a state of humidity and handkerchief.

The leave-taking had been successfully accomplished, and we were left on board the Royal Mail steamer lying at the West India buoy. By we I mean the whole of the passengers, bound either on business or pleasure for the West Indies or South America; and, to tell the truth, a pretty mixed lot they were. Spaniards, French, English, American, and Italian, all engaged in the pursuit of stewards, and the settling and squeezing of self and baggage into the respective berths allotted to them. Among the number were Rossall, Fitzroy, and self. We were bent on sport, and in the hold of the good ship we believed our shooting irons to be deposited, though we

were somewhat exercised in our minds on the subject, as we had had no optical proof. The Royal Mail Company had given us a large cabin on the port side, well for'ard, and none of us being novices in the art of travel on board ship, it did not take long to shake down. The choice of bunks was decided by the inevitable coin of the realm, and Rossall, who was the worst sailor of the three, was fortunate enough to secure the one known as the sofa berth, running fore and aft.

After having put things a bit ship-shape, we went on deck, and lighting our weeds commenced the operation of taking stock. There was a tidy sprinkling of the fair sex, married and single, with and without husbands, and among them a young lady hailing from Barbadoes, who would have made a fortune as an advertisement for blacking, but who called herself English, and prepared to risk the dangers of the deep in a green satin dress with magenta bows displayed at various points. Her brother, another symphony in bronze, had been to see her off, and with a view of cheering her up had, previous to depositing himself on the tender for Southampton, been aiding his sister to accomplish the death of a bottle of champagne. Whether it was the champagne or the excitement of leave-taking I cannot say, but my lady was, to say the least of it, very gushing, and though we were lying at anchor in the river, the motion of the ship seemed to affect her

walk, as she travelled over a large area of the deck in her movements, and exhibited a painful and dangerous indifference to various "details" and "gear" that were strewed about, on several occasions nearly coming to signal grief. At length she espied us, and wending her circuitous route in our direction, flopped into a chair, and informed us that "we were gentlemen she could see, that we should be great friends, and that she had a large income of her own." What further revelations she might have been guilty of I should be sorry to say, had not the dinner-bell and the order to get under weigh stopped her confidences. Happily, for the next three days the deck knew her place no more. We got a tremendous dusting in the Channel, and after that the usual routine of boardship life went on. Deck quoits, whist, meals, and flirtations filled up the time till we arrived one fine morning about 8 A.M. off Hayti.

Here we found a tremendous commotion going on. They were burning the town, bombarding the Governor, or doing something equally valiant. So there was a considerable delay before the officials came off to interview us. There is always a heavy swell on there, and when through our glasses we saw a bevy of black niggers got up in diplomatic coats and gold lace *ad lib.* we determined to have some fun. Rossall was to personate the captain, I the chief officer, and Fitzroy the second. Accordingly

we borrowed three of the officers' caps and awaited the arrival of the sable deputation. I established myself on the gangway, Rossall on the bridge, and Fitzroy superintending the boat's falls (we had sent away a boat for mails) and enlisted a willing crew among the rest of the passengers.

Presently the blacks' gig came alongside, and Rossall hailed them. Their boat was dancing up and down, and the "chief boss," in an enormous cocked hat and the blackest of faces, was evidently beginning to feel the effects. "Hook on there; look alive, man!" I shouted, and diplomat number one made a dive for the fall, which was swinging with the block just over his head. "Bear a hand or you will be swamped!" I yelled again, whereupon he of the cocked hat began to anathematise his fellow Ministers (or whatever they might be) most heartily, first in excellent English, and then in equally pure Spanish. At last a pair of them managed to catch the fall; seeing which I shouted "Hold on!" and tipping the wink to Fitzroy and his crew, away they ran with the slack, and the boat shooting from under the niggers, souse they both went in all their glory into the sea.

To seize our own hats and walk aft was the work of a second, and the captain coming up the companion a few minutes after was overpowered by a torrent of abuse from the dripping potentates, who had been picked up by their

companions and had come up the gangway ladder. They informed him "that they were the Duke of Something and Count Somebody Else, that they had been insulted and nearly drowned, and that the Queen should send them an apology." All of which was Hebrew to the skipper, but most comical to us three conspirators. However, a bottle of rum squared the "Duke" and his friend, and when we were under weigh again we told the captain the story, at which he laughed heartily.

It is not my intention, nor is it within my power, to describe the West Indies; that has already been done to perfection by a master hand. Suffice it that we went to a dignity ball at Jamaica, and found it pretty much the same entertainment as did "Tom Cringle." We caught barracouters, a sort of salt-water pike about three feet long, and had a day at the snipe, which was not very successful. One amusing incident occurred which is worth recording. Rossall, be it known, had a curly head, and one evening we had been invited to dine and sleep at Newcastle (the hill station), by the regiment quartered there. There had been what is called a heavy night at mess, and Rossall had, from some unknown cause (*he* said it was melon) mistaken his diggings and bedded himself down in someone else's hut. The owner appearing, also suffering from "melon," felt the curly head in the dark, and to his dimmed intellect it occurred that it must apper-

tain to a nigger. So pulling poor Rossall out of bed he set to work to wollop him soundly. Eventually both of them falling into the bath, discovered the mistake, and sangaree completed the dramatic situation.

At length the journey came to an end, and we found ourselves preparing to transport our bodies, guns and baggage to a coffee plantation some eighteen miles inland from the Central America coast, where we intended to "posada" (put up). Fitzroy, who was an extremely scientific person in his own estimation, vowed that he could load a mule better than the "gay muleteers," but as he never had seen one before, and it is an art most difficult of acquirement, I declined to allow any of my traps to form part of his experimental load, a proceeding which caused great offence. My predictions of failure, however, proved correct, for in about half a mile there was a total collapse, and Fitzroy's mule stood bare in the centre of a chaos of baggage. This remedied (by the native talent this time), we proceeded; while, to make things pleasant, it came on to rain hard, and grew as dark as pitch. Though only eighteen miles, the way (I was going to say road, but road there was none) was so rough and bad, being a series of leaps from rock to rock, that under the most favourable circumstances it took four hours. It may be imagined, therefore, what sort of journey it was under the circumstances. It took us seven hours and a half, and

we arrived at the Hacienda, tired out, wet through, and covered with mud and bruises, for none had escaped the fate of a cropper; in fact, it was a mercy that our necks remained unbroken. Of course, none of our baggage arrived, so we had to make it out with a blanket apiece the best way we could.

After partaking of tinned salmon, some beef, and a gallina, washed down with some Catalan wine, we all felt decidedly better, and after cleaning our guns, which we brought up slung on our shoulders by an ingenious device of Fitzroy's, we turned in and slept soundly for some hours, until we were all woke up by shouts from Fitzroy, and striking a light we found that a young bull-calf had entered his apartment and was licking his face, while perched on his bosom and spitting at the calf was a large tom-cat. Naturally, Fitzroy was frightened out of his wits, and said, "By Jove! I am deuced glad you chaps have come. I thought I had got jumps, or that I was being robbed or murdered." After chasing the animals out we returned to bed, and did not wake again till the morning light and sounds of unloading baggage told us it was time to be up and doing. A miserable spectacle we presented, all three so stiff we could hardly move, as still wrapped in our blanket we drank our chocolate and watched our garments toasting. The manager of the estate was mightily amused, and rather triumphant, as he

had advised us not to start the evening before, but seeing that we were determined, had bravely headed the procession.

That day we gave ourselves up to rest, and I made acquaintance with the eccentricities of a grass hammock, for not knowing the proper way to get in, it adopted the usual plan of rolling up into a rope, and deposited me on the hard floor. I said nothing, and was rewarded by seeing Jack Rossall perform the same acrobatic feat; and his face of astonishment, indignation, and pain reconciled me to the lump I felt on the back of my head. Towards evening the party of native sportsmen and guides were marshalled under the orders of the major-domo, and the plan of the campaign was drawn up.

An early start next morning saw us on our way, and a beautiful ride under an avenue of palms (the *atlea kahoon*) brought us to a valley or gorge, which it was supposed should be our first beat. A more likely looking spot for game could not well be imagined—hills rising abruptly on either side, clothed in dense underwood, with here and there patches of open where grew the tenderest of grass. Small rivulets trickling down till they joined the streams dividing the centre of the valley marked their course by the increased verdure on their margin, and now and again the freshly turned earth showed plainly that pig were not far off. The whole posse of natives had assembled at the head of the valley, which was marked by a gigantic

mahogany tree, awaiting the signal to commence the beat. Rossall and Fitzroy were posted on either side in commanding positions, while I took an advanced situation on a rock in mid-stream, from where I could see about 100 yards to my right. A dead silence reigned, broken only by the hoarse cry of the laughing monkey, and an occasional bark of deer deep down in the virgin forest. A shrill whistle rang out and the beat commenced. Hundreds of parrots rose screaming, and a flight of gorgeous macaws passed over our heads. Presently there was a rustling in the undergrowth, and a sounder of wild pig rushed past me too quick to pull at. Crack went Rossall's rifle, and piggy became bacon, he scoring first blood. Next, right opposite me, walking quite calmly with head erect, sniffing the air and stopping now and again as if to inquire what the row was about, came a noble stag. My express was raised, and carefully drawing a bead I pulled, when to my consternation, instead of the report, the ominous click of a miss fire made it plain both to myself and the deer that something was wrong. With a gigantic bound he dashed into the thick of the bush, and I had to content myself with a snap shot, which luckily took effect.

At this moment there was a shout of "tiger," and a tremendous uproar on the right flank. Sure enough there was a jaguar somewhere, but the difficulty was to know

where. We all waited patiently, the sounds drawing nearer every minute, till at length all three of us caught sight of the beast at the same moment, and three shots were followed by a fiendish snarl and rush. I stepped back, forgetting that I was perched on a rock, and head over heels I went into the stream. This was a climax, I thought; so, being near, I galloped back to the house to change, returning in time to find the bag being made up. It consisted of one boar, one stag, a tiger, or rather jaguar, and a mountain cow, which Fitzroy shot after I left. Not so bad for a morning's sport in a locality almost adjoining the coffee plantations. Doubtless we should have got more but that we were new hands, and the forest was too thick for a regular beat. It was only done as an experiment, and although in this instance it answered, it was certainly not the proper way to shoot the tracts of virgin forest in Central America. We never tried it again, but rested content with that morning's work.

SOME TYPES.

THE GENTLEMAN HORSE DEALER.

One of the most difficult problems to solve is, what trade, profession, or calling, we propose to pursue; and it is a matter of some astonishment, considering that this question is always before us, how badly we, as a rule, contrive to work it out. In most cases very little attention is paid to the eternal fitness of things, and the man, or rather boy, whose great grandfather contrived to run his ship aground and shift the blame on some one else, is destined for the Navy, not on account of his aptitude for the sea, but because of the mantle of Elijah, or, in other words, his great grandfather's cloak, which has descended on him.

Again, another young gentleman, who displays a talent for mathematics and commerce, is immediately launched

into the Army, because "Cousin Tom" is such a good soldier; or the reverse may be the case, and the young soul, "in arms, and eager for the fray," finds himself in the counting house, taking charge of a column of figures. Should he evince no particular talent of any sort, he is sent to college, in order that he may grace the Church, for which, needless to say, he never qualifies, a degree being above his capabilities or beyond his industry. How can we, where such judgment has been displayed, be surprised if all does not turn out well, if everything does not work quite smoothly? We often hear that "poor A.'s regiment was so expensive he had to sell out," a polite way of telling us that poor A. had outrun the constable or the generosity of his brother officers. Whichever it be, the fact remains, he is stranded, *sans sou et sans souci.* What does he do?

Well, he often turns Gentleman Horse Dealer, that is, he brings all the weight of his connection, manners, and friends, *as* a gentleman, to bear on and combine with the innate roguery that is somehow inseparable from horse dealing. He may not mean to cheat. He may mean to be honest as the day is long; but it is next door to impossible in that trade always to adhere to the plain unvarnished truth, and overstepping the line where honesty ends and fraud commences is a habit most easy of acquirement, most subtle in its develop-

ment. Besides, it is a game of diamond cut diamond, and when every one is trying to get round you it does not take one long to endeavour to return the compliment.

There are many phases of gentlemen horse dealers. In fact, they may almost be divided into classes. There is the gentleman who breeds, the gentleman who buys cheap at the end of one season, and, having a small bit of grass land, turns his purchases out for a summer's run, and sells at a profit at the commencement of the next, or the gentleman who, being a first-rate rider, without the encumbrance of nerves, buys regular man-eaters, and transforms them into ladies' hacks; or again, lastly, the gentleman who has his stables in London, and will sell you anything from a 400 guinea hunter to a 30 guinea dogcart horse, and is always ready to do anything for you, or, if possible, *do* you personally.

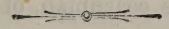
It is a curious but noticeable fact that these latter are always Majors or Captains. Whether they imagine that the name bears with it a mystic halo that enhances the value of their cattle is not decided, but it would seem as if they attached some great importance to it; and it also appears to give them a warranty for charging double the price professional dealers would ask, and telling double the number of—well, extraordinary anecdotes—concerning the horses they have for sale. Not-

withstanding all these advantages, they seldom last long, and they generally go from bad to worse, till they vanish altogether. One reason for this is that they have not the business habits in them necessary for success, and, as a rule, the temptations of the racecourse are too much for the Major, who, knowing as he may think himself, is sure to be (if he has aught of the gentleman left) outmatched in that arena.

As an instance of this I can cite a case where a gentleman took to dealing. For some time all went well, but eventually he got mixed up in a shady transaction, and was lost sight of. The next time he appeared filling the office of bookmaker's clerk to one of the clever division. It was not a pleasant *rencontre*, and when we remember that he was, perhaps, one of a number in a like position, it seems marvellous that so many gentlemen should try and compete with the trade in the way of horse dealing.

In no case can a man who is a gentleman, if he turns horse dealer, remain so, however much he may wish it, or try to keep himself free from the numerous vices that attend this trade. It is an unequal fight. Surrounded on all sides by trickery and lying in every form, sooner or later he is bound to succumb; and his self-respect once gone, it is easy to estimate the result: he is a lost man. Honest horse-dealers there are without doubt; in fact

most of the leading ones are thoroughly trustworthy, but these words are not addressed to them. It is to the gentleman ex-officer, who, unfitted for aught else, takes to this line of business, that a note of warning will not be out of place. If there be any such who are meditating a like step, and who happen to read these lines, let them take to heart *Punch's* oft-quoted monosyllabic advice—"Don't!"



COACHMEN.

THE coachman in one's early days was a man much to be respected, if not held in awe. Visions of white stockings, powdered head, or rather wig, and a comfortable figure, still rise before me. Who was it first taught me to ride? Who refused me the pony? Who ordered Dick, Tom, and Harry about, and threatened them with all the wrath of the Gods? The coachman, of course. What a magnate was he in the house! What stories he could tell when sipping the remains of the port with the butler, treating the other servants all as his lawful subjects, and expecting great homage from them! Woe betide the unlucky wight who failed to laugh or see the point of one of Mr. Hammercloth's humorous tales!

Alas! with few exceptions, he is a thing of the past, and his place is ill-supplied indeed. In London especially we find the difference, and it behoves the master or mistress nowadays to be very cautious in hiring their

coachmen and stablemen. Half of them have never been in London before, and of the art of driving in a crowded street they are blissfully ignorant, merely taking a place during the London season as a stop-gap, and, while there, feathering their nests to the utmost. Few people not behind the scenes know the amount of money that passes through their coachman's hands—in fact the amount of money of which they are robbed. On every conceivable article used in the stable black-mail is levied and commission obtained, which commission is paid naturally by an increased price on the article. In many cases the very helpers employed are mulcted of so much of their pay weekly as commission to the coachman.

But where his great *coup* tells is when his master or, better still, his mistress, requires a horse or pair of horses and he is deputed to find them. I will venture to say that out of ninety-nine horses sold by dealers during the Season, ninety-five pay a handsome tribute to the coachman; nor does he care whether they will suit or not. For he knows well that as soon as the Season is over his quarters must be shifted, and if he has succeeded in passing two or three pairs there have been two or three commissions for him. So he goes the round of the dealers' yards, and makes the best bargains for himself. "My master, Lord A——, wants a handsome pair of bays; that pair of yours seems good enough; what's the

figure?" "Two hundred and fifty guineas," is the reply. "I'll have them if you will take two hundred pounds *home*." Which, being interpreted, means: The master is to pay two hundred and fifty guineas, and the coachman is to pocket sixty-two pounds ten shillings for abusing his trust. If the dealer refuses, he goes elsewhere, and eventually succeeds in fleecing his employer.

Soon after one of the horses is lame, or goes amiss, and he has to look out for another to supply its place. The same tactics are pursued, with the exception that in this case there is a double commission to be obtained. The bargain lies thus: "I want a match for our bay; and there's the other one, who will be right in a week—only rapped himself. You must take him back and allow so much for him, and when he gets right and you sell him I must have a bit out of it." Of course the new horse is to cost ten or twenty pounds more to the master than the dealer is to get, so that our friend pockets both ways.

But why is this allowed? Why does not the dealer complain to head-quarters, or refuse to give the commissions asked? Simply because among these birds of passage (the coachmen, I mean) there is a sort of Freemasonry, and any dealer who did either of these things would be cutting his own throat. The news would fly round the whole community of horsey London, and few

and far between would be the sales effected by him afterwards. This is well known among the dealers themselves, and though they complain bitterly of the system of bribery and corruption, they are powerless to remedy it single-handed. Even supposing some few of the leading men were to take the bull by the horns, it would scarcely do any good; there are hundreds of small men who live from hand to mouth, and who would be only too willing to play into Jehu's hands. No. The remedy lies with the employers alone. Let them make it distinctly understood that they will never under any circumstances buy on the recommendation of their servants. If not sufficiently good enough judges themselves, by far the better way is to go with some friend to one of the leading dealers, state their wants and the price they will give, and leave themselves in his hands. By this means they will get a better animal for less money, and have the satisfaction of knowing that they are not being "done" by their servants, if they are done at all, which is most improbable.

But it is impossible to prevent commissions being obtained on forage and stable utensils. Of course it can be checked to a certain extent; but do what you will you cannot entirely put a stop to the practice. One item I would call attention to, especially in stables where a lady is the employer, and that is the enormous number of

utensils and clothing used. It is marvellous how quickly brushes, curry-combs, night rugs, day rugs, and surcingles disappear and require renewing. It is a favourite, though erroneous, theory with coachmen that each horse requires a complete set of brushes, &c., and that they are only to last a certain time. The best advice I can give to these ladies is to make a list of the articles *you* require (not what your *man* requires), and the time they are intended to last, with the help of someone who knows. Have everything branded with a hot iron, and when fresh things are asked for, have the old ones produced before giving an order for any others. The same thing with clothing. Make it your business to see that the old does require renewing, and do not leave it to the judgment of your coachman. A substantial proof of what becomes of half the clothing is the price which you can buy it for in very good condition if you happen to know where to go to.

Of course these remarks do not apply to every coachman. Though the old sort has passed away and given place to a younger generation more knowing perhaps, in their own estimation, still there are many excellent servants among them, thoroughly trustworthy in every sense, fond of their horses and "the family." It is those migratory birds I complain of; the men on job for the Season—men who when out of a place find work in a

dealer's yard—the class you can see daily in London now, slouching about Tattersall's. These, and the "bad hats," who, having lost their situations in the country, come up to London and foist themselves on the unwary by means of forged characters, are the men who do the mischief and bring discredit on the community of whips in general.

GENTLEMEN JOCKS.

THERE are few things about which an Englishman is touchy as his knowledge of a horse, or his powers of riding one. No matter where he comes from, what his education or training may be, he imagines that he, of all people, is the man who knows the points of a "good 'un," and can spot the defects of a "bad 'un;" and, up to a certain age, firmly believes that, could he ride the weight, the winning of the Derby, so far as his share of the race is concerned, would be a foregone conclusion. Even the minority, who in their innermost soul feel that of all God's creatures the one they know least about *is* the horse, are wont to discourse learnedly about races, and show their appreciation of the subject by their charitable endeavours to contribute to the wants of the needy (?) bookmaker!

Still this spirit of emulation does no harm, it is this which enables us Englishmen to boast of the best riders

and the best horses in the world. Beat our cavalry and horse artillery, rival the charge of the Light Brigade, cut us down in a quick twenty minutes from Crick gorse! Those who can do these things are not of this world.

But, about "Gentleman Jocks." As a rule (mind there are exceptions) they are far better in the smoking-room of the club than in the "pigskin." You can generally tell one by his get-up—tight trousers, an ash plant in his hand, a bird's-eye or spotless white tie with a small gold pin, curly brimmed hat, Ruff's guide at his fingers' ends, and a profound contempt for the man who cares not for racing, proclaim him to the world. How he fancies himself! Notice how he is always riding imaginary finishes. Sum him up after Terry. "Such a dog." Let us follow him. He is going to ride to-morrow at B——, in the Dashshire Stakes, &c., &c., two miles on the flat, &c., &c., gentleman riders, professionals 7lbs. extra. At this moment he is in the club preparing for the event, in an arm-chair with the biggest cigar and the tallest B.-and-S. glass that the club can supply, half full of curaçoa and seltzer, laying down the law to his friends and perfectly content with himself. That glass and cigar will assuredly have their say to-morrow about the distance-post, but he does not believe in that. "Bosh; it's only on the flat, no need of training; I'm fit enough."

We will go with him in the morning and see him weigh.

Get-up faultless, nothing wrong there; his servant stands by encumbered with various coats, horse-cloths, whips, weights, and saddles, all of which get mixed, and invariably go and lose themselves when wanted. At last the ceremony is over, and after a lapse of time, a deal of bother about the saddling, various long confidential conversations with the owner or trainer, our hero is mounted and ready.

The preliminary canter over, they start. . . . For the first mile all is plain sailing, he obeys his orders, and cuts out the running, or lays behind, as the case may be; at a mile and a quarter he is a little out of breath and as they near the distance-post he is conscious of a sharp pain in his side and a swelling in the throat, and begins to ride wild. Curaçoa and cigar are riding a race also! Now for the finish.

As the shouts of the ring greet him, he is almost sure to begin, and nine times out of ten throws the horse out of his stride, and is gratified by seeing the professional jockey shoot past him, hands down, with a quiet smile of contempt, and land a ten-to-one chance by sheer riding and judgment. Yet he will not take warning by this, and others will go and do likewise. No matter how good they may be across country, there are not more than four or five gentlemen, if as many, who can ride on the flat. Two things they always forget; one, that to ride a race

you must train and be as fit as your horse; the other, that to sit still and do nothing is far better than trying to emulate Don Quixote or a frantic windmill, as one so often sees done.

A professional once remarked to me, after beating me on the post, "If you'd have sat still and put your hands in your pockets instead of beating carpets with your whip you'd have won." I commend this advice to some of our gentlemen jocks of the present day.

A CHAPTER OF PROVERBS.

Fix thine eyes on the leading hound, then shalt thou better determine in which direction they may turn.

***

Ride not too close to the hunting pack, lest peradventure thou find thyself in their midst, and call down the wrath of the master upon thee.

***

Be not in too great haste to proclaim the departure of a fox; for if he turn back thou wilt look foolish in the sight of thy fellows.

***

A kicking horse is an abomination, therefore, if thou be possessed of such, choose not a crowded spot.

***

It is better to save thyself by clutching the pommel than to lie on thy back in a wet ditch.

***

To jump over a fence is a glorious deed; yet there is more safety in an open gate.

***

Hold not thy crop like one that fishes, lest men make mouths at thee, and say, "He is a cockney."

***

If thou art in a wall country pick not the lowest place; loose stones lie on the other side, and broken bones may be thy reward.

***

Advise not the huntsman what he should do, lest he turn to thee and question thy paternity.

***

See that thou use "fixed stars" for thy lights, otherwise if by chance the head fall between thyself and the saddle thy language will not be of the saints.

***

Go not too fast at a post and rails. If thou dost, grief will be thy portion.

***

Have respect unto the cry of "'ware wheat" when thou hearest it, for it appertaineth unto the friends of the hunt.

***

Forget not to pay thy subscription to the hounds; then shalt thou obtain honour with the secretary.

***

If thou hast coverts be careful to preserve foxes, and believe not thy keepers when they lie unto thee concerning their depredations.

***

Be careful of thy weapon when thou art shooting; for a careless man is an unwelcome guest.

***

Mistake not the legs of thine uncle for a hare; else if thou hast expectations they may not be fulfilled.

***

Look at the keeper as if thou wert going to endow him with riches; by this means shalt thou obtain a favourable situation.

***

When thine host is at hand chide not his dog, but wait until he has turned the corner.

***

Boast not too freely of what thou canst do, lest a rocketting pheasant laugh thee to scorn.

***

When o'erstepping a fence give heed to thy gun, that thy comrade's brains be not strewed on the ground.

***

It is easier to shoot a man than a woodcock: therefore in covert see thou keep to the line.

***

If thou wouldst go racing leave thy watch behind thee. There are many who would fain share it amongst them.

***

Be not beguiled by the wiles of the welcher; for of a certainty he will not pay thee thy dues.

***

Sweet champagne maketh the man to plunge, and lobster salad is a dangerous thing. Better is it to be on a winner than to hear from a friend that the favourite is scratched.

***

If thou hast been unlucky avoid a man who has won, or he will exalt himself over thee, and give thee sage counsel.

***

A moral certainty is a thing of joy; but if it cometh not off, then thou art best at thine house.

***

Seek not to borrow thy losses from a money lender, lest peradventure he take thy bill and serve thee with "old masters."

***

Lend not thine ear to the voice of the tipster, who speaketh in hoarse whispers. He doth but seek to betray thee into the hands of his "pals."

***

Pass not in rear of an aunt Sally pitch, lest the stick of the gipsy fell thee prone to the earth.

***

If thou goest to play cricket lend not thy bat, or thy friend may forget to return it unto thee.

***

If thou art run out, curse not the umpire; rather let thine endeavour be to look pleased.

***

Wait for the twist when fielding at leg; otherwise thou wilt lose thy side much glory.

***

When thou art caught thou mayest abuse thy bat. Though none will believe thee, yet it soundeth well.

***

Dispute not with the captain where thou shalt stand, lest he put thee to long stop to a bowler of pace.

***

Smoke not thy pipe whilst thou art in the field, for it is the sign of an indolent player.

***

Be not too eager to go out to a slow, lest it beat thee, and thou be forced to return with ignominy.

***

If thou art unskilled in the method of sailing seek not to steer in crowded places; lest they say unto thee "luff," and being ignorant of their meaning, thou rush on to destruction.

***

Bow down thine head when the boom cometh over. It is better to abase thyself than to be felled to the deck.

***

Brass buttons are beauteous to look on, yet are they no sign of a sailor, nor doth the width of thy nether garments proclaim thee a sea-faring man.

***

Ramsgate delighteth in telescopes of much size; but to the dwellers in Margate there is virtue in a glazed hat.

***

There is much poetry in the "dancing wave"; yet if sickness o'ertake thee thou wilt wish thou hadst danced at home.

***

If thou art in a dinghy display not thine agility, for it is an unstable thing, and peradventure thou mayest precipitate thyself and thy fellows into the deep.

***

In every sport see thou art courteous and obliging. Then shalt thou be praised of men and be called a sportsman.

THE END.

Stirling, September 1883.

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